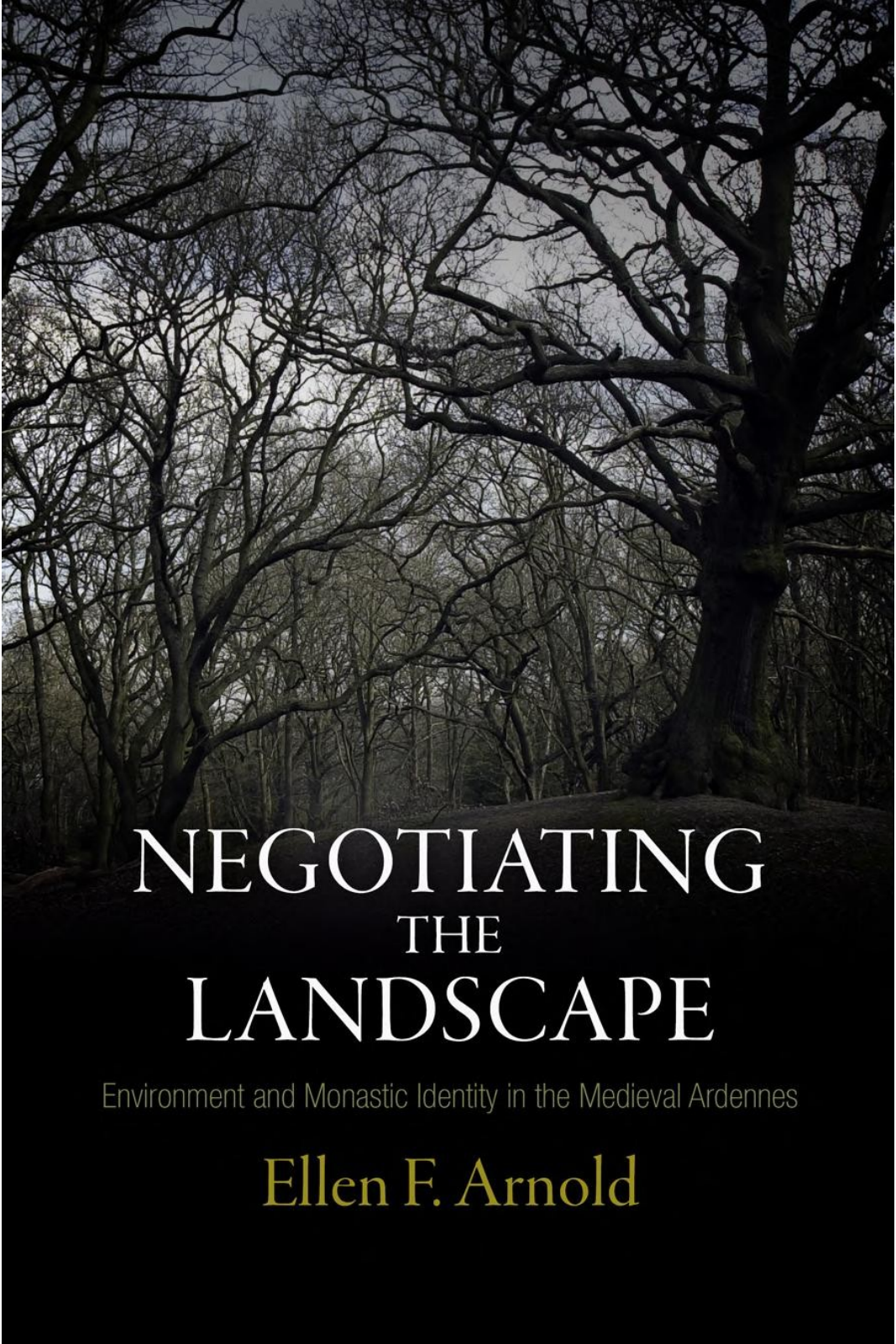




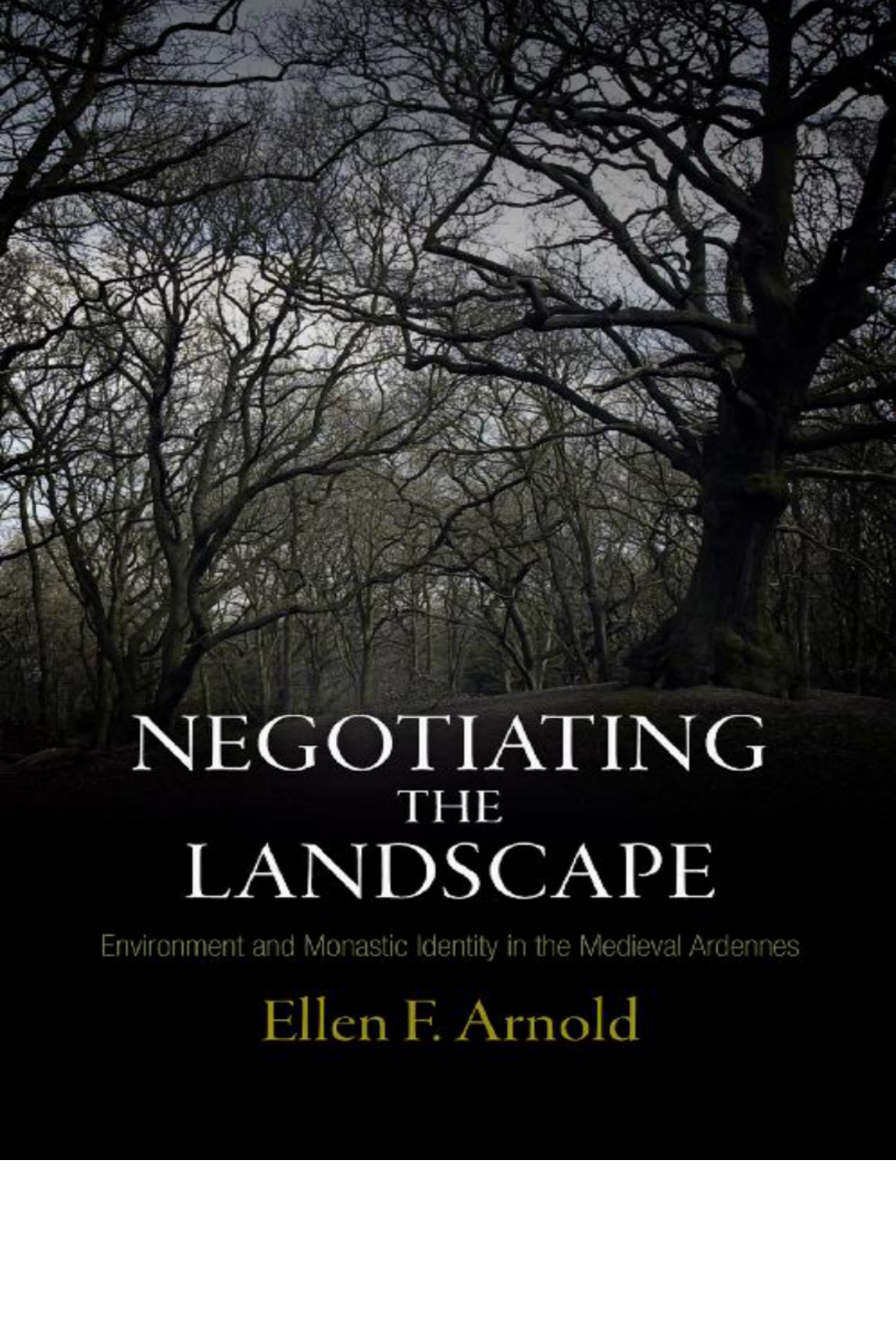
NEGOTIATING THE LANDSCAPE

Environment and Monastic Identity in the Medieval Ardennes

Ellen F. Arnold

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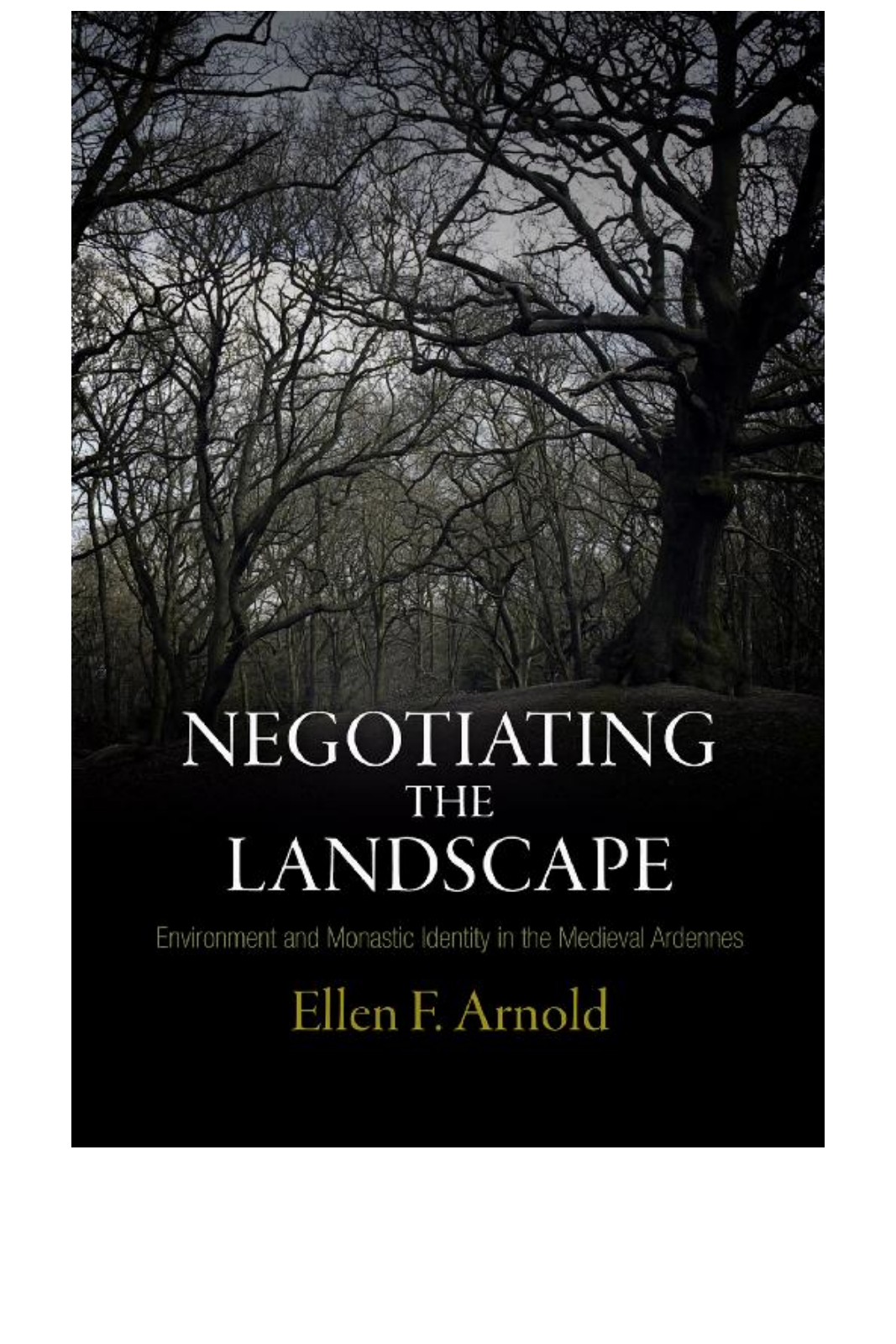
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Negotiating the Landscape

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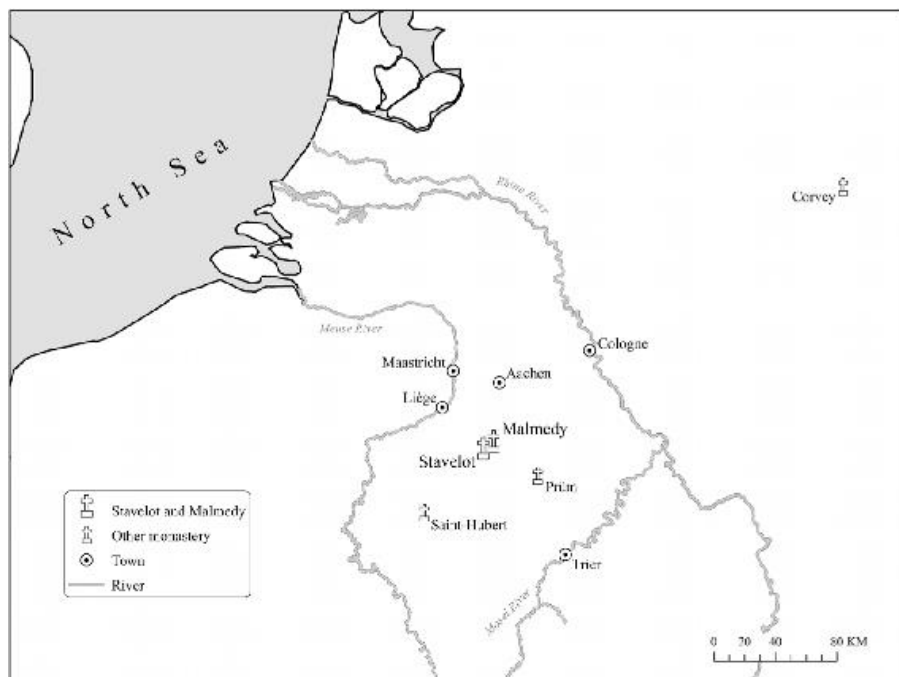
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For my parents, my first and best teachers

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Map 2. Stavelot-Malmedy and Key Local Properties. Map by Slaviša Mijatović. Sources: Joseph Halkin and C. G. Roland, eds., *Recueil des chartes de Abbaye de Stavelot-Malmedy*; Maurits Gysseling, *Toponymisch Woordenboek*.

Introduction

Approaching the Medieval Landscape

In the middle of a cold, icy medieval winter, the bare trees of the Ardennes would have provided little shelter from biting winds, snow, and freezing rain. But once spring arrived and “it was the time when the hoary ice melts off of the mountains and the west wind loosens up the fetid earth,” the Ardennes were beautiful. On one particular morning in April 716, as a monk named Agilolf walked through the beautiful forest toward his death, “the woods were in leaf, the plants were bright with flowers.”¹

Changes of the seasons often brought dramatic alterations in the appearance of the mountainous, forested Ardennes. Although at times the woods may have presented a dark visage to strangers, as spring approached they would have been clothed in a range of brilliant new greens, filled with beeches and birches, water-loving alders, and leafy, shady oaks.² As the canopy grew in over the summer, trees would provide shade and shelter for plants, people, and animals. Glades and clearings were sprinkled throughout the shady, cool woods, and they would have been bright and open places, their grasses and flowers welcoming people and animals. Then the fall would usher in a new range of colors, fruits, and nuts. Tangles of brush and trees would have grown up in the places where woods and glades met, creating a varied, interesting, and complex ecosystem.

Agilolf was walking near the Amblève River, and on the day in question, the spring thaws would have already begun. The river would have been swollen and swift, running down from its source in the Hohe Venn, a high plateau that dominates the Northern Ardennes. After flowing through the mountains surrounding the plateau and past some high, forested hills, the river is joined by one of many tributaries. The beds of both rivers were swampy, with drier land located twenty meters higher up, and a medieval author explained that they “provided many accommodations and amenities, especially an abundance of grass.”³ Before reaching the monastery of Stavelot (where Agilolf was the abbot), the river flowed by a settlement that shared its name, the manor of Amblève (or Amel), which had existed since at least Roman times.⁴

Situated in the heart of the medieval Ardennes, far from major cities, the manor was seemingly safe in the river valley, “surrounded by a dense wood at a high elevation, and defended by hills.”⁵ Medieval evidence suggests these woods would have been filled with an abundance of wild animals such as deer, boar, and wolves. Yet the manor was also in the middle of a managed

agricultural landscape, and the forest provided resources, shelter, and even additional grazing land to augment the riverside pastures and arable fields. Irrigation networks, fences, roads, and bridges traced a man-made network across the natural landscape. Charters reveal that the manor had at least one watermill, other agricultural structures, domestic buildings, and a church. The church, built on the higher land, was surrounded by a small wall that contained terraced land on the hillside.⁶ Fences and boundaries protected the manor from both wildlife and unwanted human interest and divided it up between the many groups that owned parts of the estate. One of the principal owners was Stavelot-Malmedy, and Agilolf and other abbots of the twin houses would have been very familiar with this property that was quite near their monasteries.

Agilolf might have walked through this small and vibrant corner of the Ardennes regularly, delighting in the ever-changing woodlands that were so close to his monastic retreat. On the morning in question, “the holy man passed through the woods... walked through a green field”⁷ and entered into the lore of the monastic communities. Agilolf was about to play a critical role in the history of the Carolingian Empire. For in this verdant and sunny clearing, he was viciously murdered by some of Charles Martel’s political enemies. He was killed because of his ties to Martel, who would avenge his death only days later, winning a key victory along the Amblève. The battle, which took place in April 716, would lead to Martel’s final victory and assumption of the crown.

This is a striking story, but almost entirely fictional. There is very little evidence for Agilolf’s life aside from this legend, and no corroborating evidence that links him to Charles Martel or the famous battle near the monasteries. The reality of this battle was interesting enough, but the monks of Stavelot-Malmedy reinvented it, creating an elaborate narrative about an almost fictional saint. Why did they do this? What impulses led the unknown author of the story of Agilolf to place a semi-imaginary figure in the middle of historic events, and to rewrite local and imperial history? Moreover, why did the Amblève River and its surrounding forest figure so prominently in the account? Why highlight the beauty of their landscape while at the same time framing it as the site of a grisly murder?

This book seeks to explore and explain the many religious, cultural, and social forces that met in this account and to understand the relationship that the monks of Stavelot-Malmedy had with their local environment. I am interested in accessing how nature informed cultural metaphors, how it shaped the monks’ religious identity, and how religious culture in turn influenced how the monks acted in their landscape and used their resources. Through both their experiences and their ideas, monks created and then manipulated a complex understanding of their own environment. They had, to draw on a concept from modern environmental studies, an “environmental imagination,” much of which was directed toward

understanding the natural world of the Ardennes as a type of wilderness, a pastoral haven, and a source of human salvation.

Environmental History and Medieval Christianity

Medieval forests were essential to the economic and agricultural vibrancy of medieval Europe, and the monks of the Ardennes drew on and successfully husbanded the forests for fuel, food, shelter, and wealth. However, it is only by also looking to their cultural and religious productions that we can understand the full extent of their engagement with nature. They imagined a world in which nature, God, the saints, and men interacted on a daily basis. They believed that the natural world reflected divine teachings and that in turn, God and the saints could change nature to teach people moral lessons, punish, and protect. The saints were tied to specific places, and places were inscribed with saintly power. People were in turn responsible for both recognizing and remembering these connections, and local landscapes became intertwined with local history, cult practices, and monastic memory.

For several decades now, scholars have turned the tools of environmental history on the medieval past, exploring such topics as medieval ecosystems, responses to climate change, resource management, landscape modification, fisheries management, urbanization, and deforestation.⁸ Many of these projects have been closely aligned with historical ecology (the use of written and natural records to reconstruct past ecosystems), and indeed several of its practitioners are in centers of historical ecology and environmental sciences. Scholars in Europe and America have developed methods for understanding the ecological and social metabolisms of premodern ecosystems (or medieval “ecological footprints”). Others have pursued detailed histories of medieval climate and weather extremes. There has also been interest in understanding the impact of global climate change on medieval and early modern peoples.⁹

Historians have also developed much deeper analyses of the ways that medieval political, social, and economic structures responded to and altered local and regional landscapes; an excellent example of this is Dutch peat use and the related polder system.¹⁰ Some works, like Alfred Crosby’s *Ecological Imperialism* and John Richards’s *Unending Frontier*, show the sweeping environmental impact of premodern decisions and activities.¹¹ Others are detailed studies of individual resources (such as fish populations, timber, and rabbits) that have shown both the relevance of paying attention to animal populations and resource ecologies and the deep ways that human economies and ecologies responded to and often caused changes in resource pools.¹² These approaches have demonstrated the degree to which medieval and early modern people were bound to their ecosystems, the depth of the history of human environmental manipulation, and the surprising versatility of medieval sources as tools for environmental history.

Most of these works focus on the tangible changes that nature and humans wrought on one another. But, as Donald Worster has pointed out, environmental history can also be cultural analysis, “studying the perceptions and values people have held about the nonhuman world.”¹³ Though there are some key works that address ancient and medieval ideas about nature (perhaps most notably Clarence Glacken’s *Traces on the Rhodian Shore*), sufficient models of a cultural approach to environmental history do not yet exist for the Middle Ages. In the wake of such expanded knowledge of medieval ecosystems and the human role in them, it is time for medieval environmental historians to again embrace and explore the spiritual and religious character of the medieval world.

This book foregrounds the cultural and spiritual implications of the medieval relationship with nature. At its heart is a question: how did living in and interacting with the natural world shape medieval religious identities? This is not an entirely new question, and as Richard Hoffmann has pointed out, religious history has been an important framework for understanding medieval interactions with nature.¹⁴ But this conversation has been for far too long framed around the well-known and provocative article by Lynn White, Jr. on the relation between Christian theology and ecological dominion. White argued that Christian theology created an intellectual space in which the medieval attitude toward nature became one of control and dominion. Christianity, he claimed, is “the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen.” He connected “dominion over nature” to the advent of the moldboard plow, which reflected “violence,” “ruthlessness,” and an “exploitative attitude.”¹⁵ His conclusion was that medieval civilization was, in the words of one of my twelfth-century sources, centered on an idea of nature as “soulless, senseless, and created by God for human uses.”¹⁶

In 1993, Elspeth Whitney could claim that White’s thesis was “almost overwhelmingly familiar,” since it had been “repeated, reprised, and criticized in over two hundred books and articles.”¹⁷ Though it is true that White’s work has “proven a generative thesis,” much of the discussion that it spurred has been about the modern world, and many of his assumptions about medieval Christianity have been left unchallenged. White “helped to develop the academic fields of environmental ethics and of religion and ecology.”¹⁸ Thus, much of the criticism of “the White thesis” has been directed to evaluating his scriptural analysis and his philosophy of technology, and to posing alternative readings of the Bible rather than showing other versions of the medieval worldview.¹⁹

Richard Hoffmann points out that “medieval thinkers did assume human use of animals, plants, and inanimate nature as enjoined by God but, insofar as they bothered to engage these issues at all, they dwelt more on the injunction to ‘increase and multiply’ than on any implications of ‘dominion.’”²⁰ The legacy of this other medieval idea about nature is thoroughly explored by Jeremy Cohen, who concludes that “with regard to

Gen. 1:28 itself, the ecologically oriented thesis of Lynn White and others can now be laid to rest. Rarely, if ever, did premodern Jews and Christians construe this verse as a license for the selfish exploitation of the environment.”²¹ He also calls attention to the need for scholars to study not just the Biblical verses, but also “the interpretive tradition” of exegetical literature. The Western medieval world generated a rich range of exegetical texts and cultural interpretations of the Bible’s message. White mentions only a handful of these, and notably none produced between the second and thirteenth centuries. Furthermore, the cult of saints, which White connects only to the destruction of animism, produced volumes of Christian writing that express both medieval theology and medieval religious practice. Though the Bible was the base text for medieval Christianity, biblical themes and verses were not stagnant, but used in creative ways as new texts and new stories joined the cultural canon.

To construct a richer, multilayered view of medieval religion and nature, it is time to shift focus. White’s thesis encourages a perspective on Western Christianity’s sense of dominion that has been called a “single-visioned” view of an “inherited, unchanging essence” of medieval Christianity.²² This denies medieval Christianity its vitality, variety, and nuance. As recent work in religious culture has highlighted, medieval religious experiences and even beliefs varied from place to place and from community to community. To access a broader range of evidence for how religious ideas affected and reflected daily experiences with nature, agriculture, and landscape, scholars need to turn their attention away from “universal” theological texts toward locally produced hagiographical materials.

Environmental historians have demonstrated that medieval environmental practices and experiences were multitudinous, in part because of the strikingly different natural worlds that medieval people inhabited. It stands to reason, therefore, that medieval people also thought many different things about nature. Before attempting to reconceptualize broader medieval environmental imaginations, we must first develop stronger case studies, to appreciate the full range and variety of medieval ideas. This book provides one such case study, exploring the cultural, religious, and social contexts through which the Benedictine monks of Stavelot-Malmedy interpreted the natural world, from their mid-seventh-century foundation through the midtwelfth century. It examines their environmental practices, their land management goals, their relationships with the people who shared their landscape, and the way they integrated their immediate landscape into their worldview.

These monasteries are compelling for several reasons; they were founded in a densely forested landscape, and they had economic, political, and religious prominence despite their (arguably) isolated geographic location. They were closely allied with multiple generations of kings, participated in early medieval waves of monastic reform, and generated several regionally

renowned saints and monastic leaders. Bishops of Cologne and Liège variously supported and opposed the houses' interests, even at times participating in their cults of saints and hagiographical productions. The houses were also economically and culturally connected to several other Benedictine communities in the Ardennes, particularly Prüm and Andages/Saint-Hubert, whose sources and experiences augment this study.²³

The Ardennes defined the monks' economic opportunities and shaped the religious culture of the entire community. The monks built up an economy, a power base, and an agricultural infrastructure in the forested Ardennes, and made decisions about land use, social relationships, and the local economy based on the opportunities and constraints of that landscape. These monks interacted with their surroundings in ways that resonated with broader medieval forest experiences but that differed from those of monastic communities located in regions supporting traditional open-field agriculture, or near larger urban centers. This particular landscape shaped how the monks remembered their history, framed their own experiences, and imagined the lives and powers of their saints. In turn, the monks altered the Ardennes; they built farms, managed woodlands, cleared trees, built churches and religious landmarks, and even rewrote local history, creating literary images of the Ardennes. Sometimes, these reflect the region's real topography and landscape; at other times, they represent an ideal or imagined landscape.

Stavelot-Malmedy's relationship with nature was full of contradictions, many related to the inherent problem of a monastic community dealing with the conflict between ideals and realities. The monks were stewards of land and aggressive exploiters of resources, religious leaders and economic agents, isolationists and social leaders, builders of agriculture and lovers of untamed nature all at the same time. Because of this, they had no single unifying vision of nature. Instead, the monks of the Ardennes developed multiple, coexisting ideas about the nonhuman world. The local landscape was a wild and dangerous place, connected to images of the monastic "desert"—but it was also domesticated and peaceful, tied to classical ideas of the pastoral and to the economic realities of agricultural life. The monastic communities actively incorporated these differing views of nature into their own attempts to build their community, understand and establish their religious identity, and relate to the other people who shared their landscape.

Environmental history is about the relationships between people and the natural world they inhabit; it is about interdisciplinary approaches to the past, and about how lived experience in certain environments connects to culture and art. Donald Worster, one of the pioneers of the field in America, defined environmental history as that which "deals with the role and place of nature in human life," and, more recently, John McNeill wrote that environmental historians "write history as if nature existed. And they recognize that the natural world is not merely the backdrop to human events

but evolves in its own right, both of its own accord and in response to human actions.”²⁴ In all definitions, it is the dynamism of an interest in *both* people and ecosystems that distinguishes environmental history both from traditional historical fields and from fields like historical ecology and paleoclimatology.²⁵ Many environmental historians draw heavily on these scientific fields to help them to understand the role people have played over time in shaping ecologies. But abstract forces also play a role in how humans are connected to broader ecosystems, and recognition of this has led to works that give priority to cultural and intellectual history.²⁶

Environmental history is broad enough to encourage the participation of scholars with an increasingly wide array of methods and approaches, and who work on many different regions and eras.²⁷ This has, naturally, led to different sets of priorities and scholarship. American environmental historians have placed more emphasis than others on cultural ideas of wilderness, environmental justice, the politics of conservation and environmental writers. As McNeill points out, European environmental history has traditionally been more closely aligned with historical ecology and with a methodological emphasis on “social metabolism” that he notes is both theoretical and “a hypermaterial form of environmental history.”²⁸ Richard Unger drew a similar conclusion about the status of premodern environmental history, praising the degree to which medievalists have embraced science and succeeded in uncovering knowledge about past environments. But he also pointed out that “one topic of pre-modern environmental history, central in its early days, now appears to be fading from among concerns in the field.... it is less concerned with ideas about nature. It is more about science and the use of science to inform analysis of the past interactions of people and their environments.”²⁹

Because of this range of approaches, environmental history, described by Ritvo as “an unevenly spreading blob” and by Verena Winiwarter and Martin Knoll more simply as “heterogenous,” has been difficult for practitioners to pin down under a single framework.³⁰ The best-known explanation of the field is by Worster, who identified three “layers” of environmental history: (1) “understanding nature itself, as organized and functioning in past times,” (2) “the socioeconomic realm as it interacts with the environment,” and (3) “that more intangible and uniquely human type of encounter,” that of “studying the perceptions and values people have held about the nonhuman world.”³¹ Worster argued that cultural history is, in fact, necessary to fully appreciate the relationship between people and nature, writing that “environmental history *must* include in its program the study of aspects of esthetics and ethics, myth and folklore, literature and landscape gardening, science and religion.”³²

Environmental history must include analysis of cultural ideas, because, as Lawrence Buell pointed out, the metaphors and words that societies and individuals use to describe nature, though abstract, have concrete power:

“how we image a thing, true or false, affects our conduct toward it.”³³ People act based not only on material constraints and political situations, but also on what they think and what they perceive. John McNeill, in a recent overview of the environmental history, echoes Worster’s levels, and defines cultural environmental history as that which “concerns what humans have thought, believed, written—and more rarely, painted, sculpted, sung, or danced—dealing with relationships between society and nature.”³⁴

Richard White observed that “the inspiration” for Worster’s view of environmental history “is really Braudelian.”³⁵ Fernand Braudel and the *Annales* school, in many ways the taproot of European environmental history, did give culture more prominence. The *Annalistes* were not only interested in material realities; they also emphasized culture, *mentalités*, and the intersection of place, social structure, and worldview. In contrast to the current modernism of most environmental history, the most famous practitioners of the *Annales* program, including Braudel, Marc Bloch, Georges Duby, Jacques Le Goff, and Le Roy Ladurie were premodernists. Though often connected to social and economic history, these scholars’ concerns resonate with those of environmental historians.

Braudel once described his historical interests in ways that would not feel out of place in Aldo Leopold’s work or in the preface of a modern environmental history: “I could name the plants and trees of this village of eastern France. I knew each of its inhabitants: I watched them at work.... I observed the yearly rotation of crops on the village lands which today produce nothing but grass for grazing herds. I watched the turning wheel of the old mill, which was, I believe, built long ago for the local lord by an ancestor of mine.”³⁶ *Annalistes* were concerned with the socioeconomic structures that produced both mills and lordship, and with how communities throughout agrarian, premodern Europe engaged with the natural world through agricultural practices, technological innovations, settlement patterns, and exchange networks. Medievalists have, in effect, been doing environmental history for generations.

Yet as Unger pointed out, some aspects of the *Annales* program have been left behind in the rise of the modern ecological sciences and the growth of the modern, self-conscious field of environmental history, notably the use of microhistories to explore the intersection between place and religious culture. Carlo Ginzburg’s reconstruction of the mental universe of a small-town miller and Le Roy Ladurie’s of the social and cultural world of heretical shepherds are both influential models of how investigating premodern *ideas* about God, agriculture, community, and daily life can enrich our sense of how connected culture and nature were.³⁷ Though both of these works predate the rise of environmental history, they demonstrate how scholars have attempted to link the daily experience of agricultural communities into intellectual, spiritual, and cultural history.

There is a deep tradition in environmental history of using a single place

as an access point to broader questions of human relations to the rest of nature: Leopold's Sand County, Worster's Kansas, Cronon's Chicago, Richard White's Columbia River, and even Thoreau's Walden Pond.³⁸ These works all used single places, ecosystems, and communities to explore bigger questions about America's relationship with the natural world. There are still only a handful of monographs on medieval environmental history, and even fewer that focus such attention on single places or communities. Most of the monographs have been about water history or about landscape history, and the most prominent examples of case studies have been focused on forests and cities.³⁹

There is a deeper history of detailed case studies in monastic history. The monastery of Cluny, for example, has been the subject of many full-length studies.⁴⁰ Yet Stavelot-Malmedy has not received much attention from modern scholars. There have been several biographical studies of the three most prominent abbots: Odilo, Poppo, and Wibald. Though the most recent of these is a 1991 dissertation on Poppo, most date to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁴¹ The most prolific (and influential) historian of Stavelot-Malmedy was François Baix in the interwar period, who wrote several institutional and religious history studies of the houses, including a survey of their hagiography.⁴² Other historians have studied the houses as part of larger studies of multiple monasteries.⁴³ Most recently, detailed studies have focused on the abbey's art and manuscripts, and there has been renewed attention to Wibald, including museum exhibitions and an ongoing project by the MGH to produce a new edition of his letters.⁴⁴ But in general, there has been remarkably little work done on these monasteries, despite the rich body of sources.

Here, I use Stavelot-Malmedy as a case study to explore the ways that the natural environment shaped monastic experiences and imaginations. This book analyzes how monks negotiated layers of stories and memories, fixed their own identity within a religious and environmental landscape, and connected several differing interpretations of nature's value. Because the monks' ideas about (and uses of) the natural world developed over time, this book has a long time frame, approximately A.D. 650–1150. Monastic ideas and actions were influenced by changing institutional contexts, individual leaders, and the continuous roles of local saints and landscapes.

Monastic "environmental imagination" was complex, and cannot be accessed directly, nor through any single body of evidence. Instead, we must read across the barriers of source genre, using both narrative and normative sources to reconstruct not only how medieval people used the environment, but also what they thought about the natural world. Stavelot-Malmedy's source base encourages this approach to sources. Over the five hundred years I am examining, the monasteries produced and received hundreds of charters; these recorded land grants and exchanges, taxes, property rights, conflicts and their resolutions, abbatial elections, and other administrative

affairs. A further remarkable administrative source survives from the 1130s–40s: the collected correspondence of Wibald, arguably the most influential of Stavelot-Malmedy’s abbots.⁴⁵

When using these sources to understand both the houses’ physical environs and how the monks exploited, defined, and controlled their landscape, I am on familiar ground, since to date, most environmental history of the early and high Middle Ages has focused on administrative, normative, or paleo-environmental sources. Oliver Rackham has shown just how many details of land use can be shaken out of the “forest” of early medieval charters, and Della Hooke’s work on the Anglo-Saxon landscape models how these sources can be used to reconstruct lost landscapes. Several climate historians have shown the utility of charters, annals, and other “datable” sources in reconstructing the history of medieval climate.⁴⁶

For Stavelot-Malmedy, this approach alone is unsatisfying. As Baix pointed out, there are not enough administrative documents to enable a thorough analysis of the houses’ properties, economy, or administrative history.⁴⁷ There are large temporal gaps, and as will be seen, many of the surviving records lack the kind of detail that environmental and agricultural historians have successfully used elsewhere. But as Paolo Squatriti pointed out, even when they are full of detail, “charters are most communicative when integrated with narrative sources, letters, chronicles, and biographies.”⁴⁸

Luckily, Stavelot-Malmedy also produced and commissioned a varied and under-studied body of religious writings. These appeared as early as the mid-ninth century with the first full *vita* of St. Remacle, the monasteries’ founder. This period saw monasteries across the Empire retelling their histories and renegotiating relationships with the monarchy, especially as Louis the Pious emphasized monastic reform and endowment. In Stavelot’s case, Remacle’s cult grew over the next decades, and production of a miracle collection followed. This was written in several stages from the ninth through eleventh centuries, and a second *vita* of Remacle was written in the midtenth century. This biography was written by a leading monastic scholar under the direction of a powerful bishop, showing the degree to which the abbots of Stavelot-Malmedy had worked on developing nonroyal relationships and allies as the power of the Carolingians waned.

Other figures also merited *vitae*, including Poppo, an eleventh-century abbot, and Agilolf, that semi-legendary figure from the Carolingian age. The eleventh century (a period of rivalry between the two houses) also led to a translation story of several saints from Paris to Malmedy and an elaborate record of a triumph for Remacle’s relics in support of Stavelot. This rich set of hagiographical evidence is under-studied, and has never been fully integrated alongside the administrative sources, despite many close ties between periods of administrative activity, political crisis, and hagiographical production. Environmental history, with its emphasis on the

deeper connections between all human and natural spheres, provides an opportunity to highlight the way that this web of medieval ideas, stories, and sources can be studied together to appreciate the deep connections between people, places, and imagination.

My cultural approach to the medieval environment is also related to the questions asked by literary scholars practicing ecocriticism. This field's purpose has been described as "to investigate literature's capacity for articulating the non-human environment."⁴⁹ Despite what Clarence Glacken earlier described as the popular and pernicious misconception "that the peoples of classical antiquity and of the Middle Ages had neither interest in nor capacity for appreciating nature," there is a growing body of work that explores how literary sources from the medieval and early modern world imagine, describe, and interpret nature.⁵⁰ Yet these works deal primarily with literary and vernacular sources, and use field-specific methods of literary interpretation. Thus, though my questions are influenced by those asked by literary scholars, this book is not attempting a traditional ecocriticism. I am instead approaching hagiographical materials as a historian interested in the construction of cultural identities and the sources' historical context. Furthermore, I am using sources that were theocentric rather than ecocentric; hagiographical sources were about God, religion, monasticism, saints, and morality. However, as Lawrence Buell has argued, although few sources "qualify unequivocally and consistently" as environmental there is a wide and diverse range of texts (both fictional and nonfictional) that can be used to explore attitudes toward nature.⁵¹

These are full of nature, natural metaphors, depictions of human uses of nature, and stories about the ways that nature affected and changed people. By picking up the traces of nature in these stories, and reading them in the context of the religious stories, I am, in effect, attempting an "environmental exegesis"⁵² of these sources. By introducing this concept of "environmental exegesis" I want to call attention to what I feel is the biggest contribution of this book—the deliberate inclusion of the ideas, goals, stories, and worldview of hagiographers into medieval environmental history. Stories of saints and miracles reflect particular medieval cult practices, and because of that, they are often set in real places and involve real people, written to achieve a "verisimilitude effect" that connected miracle to daily life.⁵³ They resonate with and reflect real experiences, yet they are not exact snapshots. Latin, cultbased, hagiographic materials were just as much works of the imagination, and just as much structured, authored, and symbolic as were Romances, poems, and sagas. They can be treated as constructed, imagined texts, and they can be read with an eye toward the way that the natural world was imagined, constructed, and described.

The potential value of these sources for environmental history, particularly the hundreds of stories in miracle collections and the lives of minor or only regionally important saints, has not yet been fully explored.

As Ashley and Sheingorn point out, it is important to see that for the cult of St. Foye, “the cultural work performed by its hagiographic texts serves purposes that cannot be identified as solely religious.”⁵⁴ Scholars have returned with new questions to this old corpus of writings, highlighting the depth and texture of monastic sources. Of these, several have had a significant influence on my approach. Caroline Walker Bynum’s work on food, identity, and spirituality is a model for how to trace the intersections of religious and gender identities, material culture, and the goals of local hagiographers.⁵⁵ Barbara Rosenwein’s work on Cluny and on emotional history, Patrick Geary and Rosamond McKitterick’s studies of memory and the written record, and Sharon Farmer’s textured investigations of Louis IX’s sainthood trials all provide models for how religious ideas, economic and political practices, and the processes of writing and record-keeping can be woven together for a more complete image of medieval communities.⁵⁶

Hagiographical sources do of course present problems for environmental analysis, in part because of the depth of borrowings from earlier religious writings. However, though they contain echoes of earlier works, most were composed and compiled locally, with clear agendas, including that of tying saintly power closely to the local landscape. This would prevent authors from borrowing too heavily from irrelevant topoi when describing local events and geographies. Moreover, as I demonstrate throughout this book, hagiographic materials did not exist in a vacuum; they were associated with and interacted with a body of charters, letters, and other documents, and all of these are bound up together in monastic ideas about the control of people, the saints, and the natural world. These works were also tied to the local concerns of the authors: “communities did not produce historical narratives fortuitously, but rather that they did so under specific circumstances and that the writing of a text often served as a catalyst for the resolution of internal or external crises.”⁵⁷

The hagiographical materials from Stavelot-Malmedy have been routinely dismissed because they were derivative and copied too heavily from other works—a kind of religious bricolage. One scholar even described the *Passio Agilolfi* as a kind of “fantasy building,” unmoored from any real foundation.⁵⁸ Because quotations, borrowing, forging, and manipulation of earlier works were a routine part of medieval writing across all genres, saints’ lives (like histories and charters) should not be dismissed because of the echoes of earlier sources. Instead, the echoes should be treated as a deliberate part of the process of creating the sources. As McKitterick points out in her discussion of the *Liber Historia Francorum* (itself an important source in the imagination of at least one of Malmedy’s monks), “it should not be seen in terms merely of what is borrowed or new, but as a complete text with very distinctive emphases of its own.”⁵⁹

This book takes as its starting point an assumption that the generations of monks who collectively and individually built the history, economy, and

religious culture of Stavelot-Malmedy acted within a set of cultural and religious frameworks that were both part of broader cultural trends and shaped by local peculiarities. They were influenced by their religious goals, by the landscape they inhabited, by relations with allies and enemies, and by the stories they told themselves and others about all of those things. Uncovering the many ways that environment was connected to this community's identity and history can let us see not only these monks' environmental imagination, but also point toward ways of seeing place, nature, landscapes, and environmental worldview in the ideas, actions, and sources of other medieval people. But because *local* identity and history matter, before broader issues are addressed it is important to understand the political and religious history of these houses.

Historical Background: Stavelot and Malmedy

Stavelot and Malmedy were founded by St. Remacle (Remacius or Rimagilius,⁶⁰ d. 670), one of a cadre of seventh-century monk-bishops who led the conversion of the Ardennes and founded almost fifty monasteries in modern Belgium by about 725.⁶¹ Remacle began his religious career at Luxeuil, then became abbot of Solignac in 632.⁶² After more than a decade, he left in order to establish his own monastery in the Ardennes, first choosing a site called Cugnon. This foundation failed, and Remacle moved to the Meuse River valley where he founded Stavelot and Malmedy in the mid-seventh century. Charters claim a foundation date of 648, and the *Annales Stabulenses* (compiled in the eleventh century) date the building of the monasteries to 652.⁶³ Records do not show which house was founded first, and the two houses would debate this for centuries.

Remacle's motives in founding two houses are also unknown. He may have intended the houses to be a double monastery with a monk-bishop as its abbot, comparable to similar foundations at Ghent and Marchiennes. He may also have been working in the model of Solignac, creating an Irish-style community that would have been the first of its kind in eastern Belgium.⁶⁴ The double foundation was further complicated by the fact that Remacle founded Stavelot in the diocese of Tongres-Maastricht/Liège and Malmedy in that of Cologne.⁶⁵

The two monasteries were bound together not only by Remacle's joint foundation, but also by patronage and politics. Around the year 648 a charter appears under King Sigibert's name, confirming the houses' foundation and bequeathing them lands and privileges. Grimoald, the Pippinid mayor-of-the-palace, also signed the charter, and it has been suggested that he was the real force behind the new foundation.⁶⁶ The monasteries do appear to have enjoyed steady royal protection and privilege through the Merovingian period, and Stavelot and Malmedy may have been among the best endowed

of the royal monasteries.⁶⁷ The houses also received papal support from an early date. In 660, Pope Vitalian (657–672) issued one of the houses' oldest surviving charters. The pope not only gave Babolenus a legal document; he also gave him a saint. Vitalian allowed Babolenus to move the relics of a little-known martyr, St. Semetrius, to Stavelot.⁶⁸ This became the first of an important series of translations, and marked the start of Stavelot-Malmedy's rich cult of saints.

The houses received another boon as the Pippinid/Carolingian dynasty rose to power and prominence. Grimoald had been an early supporter of Stavelot-Malmedy, and the houses were near not just the site of Charles Martel's victory at Amblève, but also Pippin's homeland of Herstal and the government centers of Aachen and Cologne. These connections were the launching point of the houses' regional prominence, and proved important to monastic power, memory, and self-definition. Over the course of the ninth century, Stavelot and Malmedy solidified their relationships with the Carolingian monarchy. Louis the Pious (r. 814–840) was particularly prominent in this process, confirming the monasteries' core holdings and protecting their interests. Later abbots (and monarchs) repeatedly referenced Louis and his rulings in later charters, and the monks later included a story about him in the collection of miracles attributed to St. Remacle.⁶⁹ It was around the end of Louis's reign (840) that the first biography of Remacle (the *vita prima*) was written.

Stavelot-Malmedy continued to acquire new lands and grow, and by the late 800s, Stavelot and Malmedy seem to have been relatively successful, prominent, and economically secure. Baix characterized the monks of the period as "tenacious,"⁷⁰ but a crisis point was approaching. In the winter of 881, according to the *Annales Fuldenses*, Vikings attacked the monasteries of Stavelot, Malmedy, Prüm, and Inda, the palace in Aachen, and the cities of Cologne and Bonn. Regino of Prüm confirms the attack on Stavelot-Malmedy, and the *Annales Stabulenses* report that in 881, "the monastery of Stavelot is burned up by the fire of the Normans." As a result of the attacks, "the body of St. Remacle was brought out of its tomb on 6 December."⁷¹ The monks abandoned the monastery, taking Remacle's relics with them. This led to a forced tour of monastic properties that allowed the monks to remind the residents of the broader region of the presence and miraculous powers of St. Remacle.

Whether or not there was any substantial damage done to the monasteries by the Vikings, the cultural, political, and religious impact of the attacks was wider reaching and longer lasting than the loss of buildings and treasure alone could possibly have been. The attacks encouraged the monks to rebuild infrastructure, to promote themselves in order to find new benefactors and defenders, and to consolidate both their administrative and religious records. They also triggered a flurry of hagiographical writing, most particularly the second book of the *Miracula Remacii* (hereafter

Miracula), a collection of almost forty miracle stories that were pivotally important in the preservation of the houses' religious memory and in setting religious and behavioral models for later monks, patrons, and dependents. The tales range from the curing of the ill and possessed to the preservation of the monks against nature and the elements and the punishment of those who (like the Vikings) chose to attack rather than support the houses and their mission.

The Vikings were not the only setback Stavelot-Malmedy endured in the ninth century; they also had to deal with more direct control by the crown. Under Lothar II (855–869), the royal court took direct control of the houses, and in the subsequent forty years, there were seven external lay abbots.⁷² The narrative sources for Stavelot and Malmedy are silent about this period of lay abbacy, but the *vita* of John of Gorze claims that Stavelot's next reform abbot, Odilo, sought "to correct to straight lines, with the help of Christ, those whom he had found to be powerfully crooked."⁷³

Odilo was also a royal appointee, and he linked Stavelot to the Gorze reforms, part of a general reform trend in the tenth century that included the better-known reforms at Cluny.⁷⁴ Early historians of Stavelot saw Odilo's abbacy (937/38–954) as ushering in a new era of religious fervor, intellectual drive, and monastic prestige at Stavelot. A. Courtejoie wrote that as a result, Stavelot again became "a seed-bed for saints and a training school for great men."⁷⁵ Yet no literary or religious works survive from his abbacy. Instead, there are only a handful of administrative charters.⁷⁶ Odilo encouraged the bureaucratic consolidation of the monastic estate and the development of the chancery, a focus that would be repeated by subsequent "reform" abbots.

Another result of Odilo's abbacy was that in 954 he was able to restore Stavelot-Malmedy's rights to free abbatial election. He died shortly thereafter, and for the first time in nearly a century, the monks elected their own abbot, Werenfrid (954–980). The monasteries enjoyed a renewed sense of self-directed purpose, but in that same year an external factor confirmed many of their fears. At the beginning of the military excursion that would culminate in the Battle of the Lechfeld (955), the Magyars crossed through Belgium. En route, a small group attacked and burned Malmedy. The attack is recorded in a charter from 1007 and in the *Annales Stabulenses*, which reports that in 954 the "Hungarians filled the regions of Gaul."⁷⁷ Thus, less than a century after the Viking attacks, and in the wake of marked internal attention to religious and fiscal management, the monks were again forcibly reminded of the range of potential threats to their properties.

In the following years, they compiled their first cartulary, the *Codex Stabulensis*. Like many central medieval cartularies, this appears to have been intended to shore up property claims, confirm existing social bonds, protect their legal rights, and preserve monastic history and memory.⁷⁸ As part of this same process, Stavelot-Malmedy also commissioned new hagiographic works, most notably the *vita Remacii secunda* (hereafter *Vita*

Remacli).⁷⁹ Notger, the archbishop of Liège, claimed authorship of this work in a preface, but it appears that he farmed it out to Heriger of Lobbes.⁸⁰

This renewed interest in hagiographical production was sustained by Stavelot-Malmedy's next reforming abbot, Poppo (1020–1048), who worked to develop the material infrastructure of Stavelot and to expand Remacle's cult.⁸¹ Poppo, another external appointee, had connections to the emperor and the reform leader Richard of Verdun. In all, Poppo was involved with the reform and leadership of least twenty houses, and ensured that many of his followers and supporters became leaders of monastic communities in the region.⁸² These political and religious connections gave Poppo an immense ability to effect change at Stavelot. He rebuilt Stavelot's basilica, oversaw the completion of the *Miracula Remacli*, worked to ensure Stavelot's rights to free abbatial election, and restored and consolidated properties. Yet he was ultimately unable to fully unite the two houses, which had been fighting off and on over supremacy since the tenth century.

The final stages of this conflict are recorded in the *Triumphus Remacli* (hereafter *Triumphus*), which was written around 1065 by monks from Stavelot. The *Triumphus* provides details of the worst part of the schism and the formal separation of Malmedy from Stavelot, which is discussed in more detail in [Chapter 4](#). It also makes a powerful hagiographical claim of Remacle's ultimate control of both houses. Malmedy's monks countered Stavelot's claims in part by producing their own hagiographic literature, including the *Translatio et Miracula s. Quirini* (hereafter *Translatio Quirini*) and the *Passio Agilolfi*. Both works, probably written between 1061 and 1071, are attributed by most scholars to the same unknown author (a monk from Malmedy). The *Translatio Quirini* records the translation of the bodies of saints Quirin, Nicasius, and Scubicule from the outskirts of Paris to Malmedy. The text contains stories of the trip, including the miracles performed by the saints and the reception of the monks by various communities. The second source, the *Passio Agilolfi* (hereafter *Passio*) tells the story of a single saint, Agilolf, the semi-mythical eighth-century abbot we met at the start of the chapter.

The burgeoning hagiographical output was part of a general rise in Stavelot-Malmedy's cultural profile over the course of the 1000s. The Meuse River valley had become a center for monastic and church schools, and Liège was a literary and cultural center of note. The literary and especially artistic and crafts productions of the region are referred to now as “Mosan” works. The chance survival of a library catalog from Stavelot shows that the monks had a large collection of religious and secular works. In addition to many commentaries on scripture, liturgical books, hymnals, antiphonaries, numerous copies of the Bible, and theological works, they had standard works of importance to monastic houses, such as the lives of the ancient fathers and the rules of St. Basil and St. Benedict. The monks also had copies of the most popular and common hagiographical works and, of course, the

biographies of saints of local importance. The breadth of these religious holdings is a reminder that the monks of Stavelot developed their worldview and their environmental imagination based on more than just scripture. Ties to Liège might have helped the monks also develop substantial holdings in geography, grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music, agriculture, law, and zoology.⁸³

By 1100, signs pointed to a renewed cultural and religious florescence, but the monasteries faced another abbatial crisis. Between 1098 and 1119, two external abbots were in charge. One of these, Poppo II of Beaumont (1105–19), was remembered (according to an 1128 charter) as the “depopulator of our lands.”⁸⁴ After Poppo II’s abbacy, the monks of Stavelot elected their own candidate, Warnier, but the emperor never confirmed him and the pope deposed him five years later. Finally, in 1124, the monks elected Cuono de Logne, and he was confirmed. However, Cuono was not a monk from Stavelot, but from Malmedy, making him the first monk of Malmedy to be appointed as abbot of both houses.⁸⁵

When Cuono was elected, a monk named Wibald was the porter at Stavelot. Wibald was a native of the Ardennes. He became a monk at Waulsort and then went to Liège to study theology, liberal arts, medicine, and agronomy under Rupert of Deutz, an influential scholar and a leading figure in the investiture controversy. Wibald gained the attention of the royal government, and in 1131 Lothar III invested him as abbot of Stavelot-Malmedy. He was a powerful and learned abbot who reshaped both the material and intellectual property of the monasteries, and his abbacy heralds what many historians have identified as Stavelot-Malmedy’s “golden age.”⁸⁶

In the 1130s, Wibald accompanied Lothar III to Italy, where he briefly served as abbot of Monte Cassino. This risky post did not go unrewarded. Only three days after he placed Wibald as head of Monte Cassino, Lothar gave Stavelot the “Golden Bull of Aquino.” Issued on purple parchment, written in gold ink, and sealed with the golden bull, this charter was “the most honorable, most distinguished, and at the same time most extensive charter that Stavelot ever received.”⁸⁷ This was a comprehensive confirmation of the relationship between the monastery and the Empire. In addition to affirming all earlier holdings granted by former emperors, Lothar reestablished Otto II’s election rules, added to Stavelot’s landed wealth, and again confirmed Stavelot’s supremacy, decreeing that Malmedy was never to be allowed to separate from Stavelot “which it is now tempted to do for the third time.”⁸⁸ He placed the monasteries under his explicit protection and control, stating that their holdings would remain “in the hands and in the service” of the emperor.

When elected abbot of Stavelot, Wibald swore “to regain scattered properties” and protect the monks and their lands.⁸⁹ He actively pursued new lands and new privileges, procuring at least eight royal charters for Stavelot, and six for Corvey.⁹⁰ This is more than have survived from the

previous 130 years, and the two diplomas that Wibald received from Frederick Barbarossa in 1152 and 1153 would be the last surviving royal charters to the monasteries for almost two hundred years.⁹¹ Wibald also received privileges from at least five of the six popes who reigned while he was abbot.⁹²

Yet because of his international reputation, Wibald was rarely in residence at Stavelot. His longest stay was from 1130 to 1135, and his last substantial residence at Stavelot was in 1148, when he remained for almost a year. From 1139 on, Wibald spent a considerable amount of time in the court of Conrad III of Staufeu (1138–1155). He served in the royal chancery, attended imperial assemblies, and was involved in all affairs between Conrad and Byzantium.⁹³ Wibald's support for Conrad's political concerns eventually led to his leadership of a third monastery, Corvey, which split his attention even further.⁹⁴ He was also frequently involved in broader church affairs, traveling to other monasteries, attending church assemblies, and visiting Rome.

After the winter of 1150/51, Wibald spent most of his time at Corvey. Although not particularly beneficial for Stavelot, Wibald's long periods of absence are advantageous for modern historians, since he accumulated a vast correspondence. Wibald wrote and received hundreds of letters from emperors, popes, bishops, nobles, and his own subordinates, and collected them in his "letter book."⁹⁵ Wibald's letters (along with the other documents associated with his abbacy) comprise more than one-third of all of the documents surviving from the foundation of Stavelot and Malmedy to around 1200.⁹⁶

A man of letters with an interest in science, Wibald was a true "twelfth-century Renaissance" man. The subjects of his letters range from discussions of fine theological points to the handling of routine administrative tasks. He used these letters to exchange knowledge, manuscripts, medicines, and even, in one case, rabbits.⁹⁷ Wibald was also a patron of local artisans, and invested heavily in the decoration of Stavelot's altars and shrines. One of Wibald's surviving commissions, a bust of St. Alexander, is a fine example of Mosan metal- and enamel-working, as is the thirteenth-century reliquary of Remacle, considered a masterpiece of the style.⁹⁸ Wibald also commissioned and probably designed two elaborate golden altarpieces (or retables), both now lost. Their programs are known, however: the first depicted Remacle's foundation of the houses, and the second showed the mysteries of the passion and the resurrection of Christ, with the figures of Wibald and his patroness and correspondent Empress Irene. Further underscoring his broad imperial connections, he may also have commissioned a gold and enamel reliquary known as the Stavelot Triptych to house a fragment of the true cross from Byzantium.⁹⁹

Wibald died, at the age of sixty, on 19 July 1158, while returning from Constantinople. Fittingly, news of this reached the monks via letter. Wibald's

body returned to Stavelot, where he was formally buried inside the church over a year later, on 26 July 1159. This study needs an endpoint; reluctant as I am to tie this to the death of a single leader, 1159 saw the convergence of several things that mark an end to the early and central-medieval core identity of the houses.

Most significantly, though Wibald's successor, Erlebold (1158–1192), tried to continue his predecessor's programs, the age of Stavelot-Malmedy's great saint-abbots was over. Despite (or perhaps because of) his fame and influence, Wibald was never venerated as a saint.¹⁰⁰ No significant works of hagiography followed and there was less investment in the material infrastructure of the cults. Remacle's relics are still venerated in a church in Stavelot, and Poppo would eventually be canonized in 1624, but the great flourishing of Stavelot's medieval saint cults was drawing to a close.

Broader changes were afoot. By the 1150s, the crusades had opened for Europe a whole new world of conflict, cultural exchange, and international connections. The evolution of the Cistercian order had dramatically changed the monastic experience; though the Benedictine order remained important throughout the Middle Ages, their dominance of economic, political, and religious landscapes was effectively over. Royal abbeys, too, were eclipsed by institutions founded by minor nobles, knights, and powerful merchants. The decentralization of royal power in the German Empire and the Low Countries and the problems facing the Hohenstaufen house also meant that Stavelot-Malmedy's special status as a royal house was no longer a guarantee of support and privilege. As their patrons dwindled and the vibrancy of the earlier reform movements shifted to other orders, the forces that had pushed Stavelot to prominence receded, and the monasteries faded away.

There were more subtle changes to monastic identity, visible in a document issued in 1159, just one year after Wibald's death. The foundation charter for a hermitage at Mie was preserved at Stavelot.¹⁰¹ The Latin original was copied into Old French, and as such is the earliest vernacular document from the monastic archive, reflecting a significant change in archival and documentary practices. There is no reference to the role or power of Remacle and other saints, or of Stavelot-Malmedy's early history. Also missing, despite the woodland location of the hermitage, is any invocation of the idea of the forest as part of a monastic wilderness, which for centuries had been a fundamental part of Stavelot-Malmedy's identity.

Faith in the Wilderness

Many medieval monastic communities told stories that linked their early history with a transferred "desert" setting, equating their own landscapes (forests, swamps, mountains) with the dangers and opportunities of the

ancient desert wilderness.¹⁰² The Anglo-Saxon life of Bertuin, written around 800, sets the foundation of Malonne in “a great forest full of dense bushes and brambles and thorns and the lairs of beasts and thieves’ caves and the abodes of demons.”¹⁰³ This vision was not limited to the early Benedictine monks; centuries later, a Cistercian monk wrote a *vita* of St. Godric, an English hermit (d. 1170), that embraced the idea of the forest as a place of solitude and wilderness. Godric “sought out the depths of the forests, and dwelled in the beds of wild animals; he did not flee from wolves, nor from interactions with serpents, nor from looking at or interacting with any part of the wild.”¹⁰⁴ In this view, forests were *loci horribili*, isolated and dangerous places full of wild animals, thieves, and political and spiritual enemies.

The idealization of solitude had its roots in the legends of the desert fathers and emphasized the monastic goal of separation from the world. A *topos* developed that monasteries were founded in sites devoid of people, “in eremi” or “in solitude”: the desert. It has been suggested that the “desert in northern Gaul was bound up with the notion of the frontier,” invoked in spaces where the monks perceived themselves as marginal or excluded, either socially, linguistically, or religiously.¹⁰⁵ This supported the ideas of eremitism as isolation from community, but did not necessarily involve harsh landscapes. Peter Damian’s eleventh-century *vita Romualdi* describes how that saint (d. ca. 1027) enjoyed hunting before becoming a hermit. When wandering in “the beautiful places (*loci amoeni*) of the woodlands,” he longed for the desert, saying to himself, “Oh, how well hermits would be able to live in these woodland retreats; how well they could be quiet here, away from all the confusions of the world’s din.”¹⁰⁶

Reflecting medieval metaphors, modern scholars also frequently understand medieval forests as synonymous with wilderness, and wilderness as synonymous with fear and isolation. In her work on medieval forests, Corinne Saunders went so far as to describe Richard FitzNigel’s discussion of the forest as “clearly implying a *wooded and therefore wild* landscape.”¹⁰⁷ Images of monastic solitude are also connected to depictions of the medieval wilderness (and forests) as “waste” land, unattractive and desolate areas not used or cultivated by people; land beyond the bounds of ordered and civilized nature. Jacques Le Goff, though recognizing that it was not “wholly wild,” described the forest-wilderness as being located “on the extreme fringes of society.”¹⁰⁸ Vito Fumagalli, in his evocatively titled *Landscapes of Fear*, viewed the forest of the early Middle Ages as an aggressive foe: “people were swallowed up in a countryside which was still largely untamed and had vast expanses of wilderness everywhere.”¹⁰⁹ And in his article “Moines et nature Sauvage,” René Noël tied the early medieval Ardennes into this view, describing them as overwhelmingly wild. At Stavelot, he claimed, Remacle found “instead of fields, vines, and fruiting trees, the enormity of the wooded solitude, of the desert wasteland. The hard Ardennes.”¹¹⁰

Yet early medieval rhetoric and later Romanticism aside, by 648, Stavelot,

far from isolated and wild, was in the middle of a landscape marked by successful Merovingian settlement. And by the 700s, “on a map, the fisci form an almost unbroken chain” of settlements.¹¹¹ In these two interpretations of the character of the early medieval Ardennes lies the problem of evaluating monastic sources. Did the monks of the Ardennes live in forests that centuries of human settlement had shaped into a familiar and domesticated landscape, or in a wild landscape? Were monks living dominated by dense (and dangerous) forests? Or were they *imagining* that they did?

In spite of the endurance of the idea of “desert,” Benedictine monks did not normally live in untamed and isolated wastelands. They established monasteries in regions that had long settlement histories and included the conversion and care of local populations as part of their religious mission. The monks not only lived in this domesticated landscape; they themselves were part of the process of its domestication. Throughout the Middle Ages, monastic institutions were not only religious leaders, but also careful and creative property owners. This can and has been interpreted (by both their peers and modern historians) as a conflict between faith and wealth, between spiritual and secular success. However, critics may have painted these contrasts too sharply; though individual monastic leaders and communities certainly wrestled with the ideas, many monastic groups had reconciled these tensions for themselves. The monastic *locus amoenus* provided not just an antithesis to the wild, but a separate metaphor that helped the monastic authors forge links between agricultural labor and spiritual reform.

Around 937, a monk from Saint-Hubert wrote a *vita* of St. Berégisus, the eighth-century founder of his monastery. He describes the Ardennes as a remote and isolated place and promotes the value of carving out a holy space from wild nature. Yet though it has echoes of the desert wilderness, this story reveals a different set of relations between monks and forests, characterized by engagement and control rather than fear. Dense, “shady woods” surrounded the place where Berégisus established the monastery, and “he began in earnest to fell the leafy [trees] and to expand the space for the construction of buildings.” Finally, with “the woods having been cut down, a dwelling space was measured out.”¹¹²

In medieval religious experience, fear and safety could be part of the same dynamic, and the forest was also connected to the idea of *locus amoenus* and the pastoral. John Howe has noted that though contradictory, these ideas were “a double heritage, intertwined from biblical times onward.”¹¹³ This dichotomy is visible even in Athanasius’s *vita* of St. Anthony, who though fleeing to the depths of the desert, took care to establish and grow a vegetable garden. As Dominic Alexander points out, “the fruitfulness of the uncultivated wilderness became established as a theme early on in the West.” He adds that the monks and hermits were also

interested in protecting this abundance, and “were clearly determined to mark their possession of sylvan resources.”¹¹⁴ The medieval blurring of desert/bounty and wild/pastoral is very important to understanding monastic interactions with nature, and the sources from Stavelot-Malmedy demonstrate that seemingly opposite views of the same landscape could be closely connected. The monks used contradictory images of the natural world together to help create and reinforce their religious culture and identity.

The monastery of Fulda is a well-studied example of these issues. Fulda was founded by St. Sturm in the mid-eighth century. Though the house’s early charters show that there was significant settlement before the monks arrived, a letter from St. Boniface (Sturm’s mentor) to Pope Zacharius employs the language of solitude, describing Fulda as “a wooded spot in a hermitage of vast solitude.”¹¹⁵ This statement has been interpreted in several ways by scholars. It has been suggested that the issue of solitude here might reflect not just the monastic ideal, but also an attempt by the monks to assert specific claims over the nature of their properties. Yet other scholars have argued against such interpretations of solitude tropes as “knowing and deceptive” misrepresentations of the legal status of property rights, pointing out that authors of *vitae* often acknowledged previous settlement, “and saw therein no contradiction to *solitudine*.”¹¹⁶

Help with how to reconcile these monastic contradictions can be found in modern discussions of the American Wilderness Ideal. In a well-known article “The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature,” William Cronon, writing about U.S. environmental history, argues for a more expansive definition of wilderness. This article has received much criticism from modern wilderness activists, and is part of a longer debate about the goals and practices of the American Wilderness movement.¹¹⁷ Though much of that debate centers on the implications of these ideas for modern wilderness preservation, Cronon’s criticism of a one-sided approach to the idea of wild nature is very relevant to the study of medieval relations to nature. He claims that the planted, known, and domesticated natural world is not something separate from wilderness, but is instead part of a single set of human interactions with nature. He calls attention to two trees: a tree in a backyard garden and a tree in “an ancient forest.” He points out that the modern idea of wilderness does not take the tree in the garden into account, despite the fact that it is no more or less a part of nature than the other tree. The domesticated landscape has been marginalized from the modern view of nature and the wild. Yet true appreciation of the relation between humans and nature, he concludes, is only possible “if we abandon the dualism that sees the tree in the garden as artificial—completely fallen and unnatural—and the tree in the wilderness as natural—completely pristine and wild.” Instead, he continues, “we need to embrace the full continuum of a natural landscape that is also cultural.”¹¹⁸

Perhaps the most widely known work on the medieval wilderness is Jacques Le Goff's 1980 essay on the monastic "desert-wilderness." In this provocative and expressive essay, Le Goff argued for a complex view of the value of wilderness for medieval people. Following monastic sources, he explored the origins of the medieval wilderness in the desert ethos of Eastern monasticism, whose themes "were tirelessly reworked, multiplied, and embellished," by John Cassian (and other early medieval authors).¹¹⁹ Le Goff in turn relies on monastic writings and secular literature, seeing in both ideas of wild nature as both dangerous and bountiful; however, Le Goff draws a line between the two genres that I would like to erase. He looked to saints' lives, cartularies, annals, and other monastic writings for one type of wilderness, but then claimed that "the deeper symbolic significance of the forest must be sought in works of the imagination," by which he meant exclusively secular writings. Throughout this book, I present hagiographies, histories, and even the occasionally forged charters as just as *imagined* as vernacular romances.

In summary, he claimed that "opposed to the forest-wilderness in the medieval Western value system was the 'world,' that is, organized society." The forest wilderness allowed for the construction of an opposition "between nature and culture, expressed in terms of the opposition between what was built, cultivated and inhabited (city, castle, village) and what was essentially wild (the ocean and forest, the western equivalents of the eastern desert)."¹²⁰ Wilderness, the forest, and the desert all become one thing in his analysis, and he wrote that "all went to the forest to behave as men of nature, fleeing the world of culture in every sense of the word."¹²¹

While I agree that the forest (and the monastic wilderness) was often set in contrast to urban (and courtly) civilization, it is important to recognize that the monks were not in fact fleeing "culture in every sense of the word." Instead they were constructing their own culture, using images of both wildness and domesticity to build, reinforce, and confirm a monastic identity that was both connected to the world and yet somehow apart from it.

As Cronon argues, wilderness cannot be separated from the broader range of nature as neatly as many people try to. Wilderness is not just the empty place—it is intimately bound up with the domestic. The domestic, the wild, and the pastoral were not clearly separated in the Middle Ages. In spite of their goal of isolation, monks lived and worked in an environment that was known, managed, and mundane, and they did so while interacting with other people. There was no one set of medieval ideas or images about nature that could be used to establish what was human, what was wild, and what was divine. God interacted with the human and the nonhuman. Saints sought out the wilderness during their lives, and after death acted in the human landscape, protecting agricultural space, crops, and other resources. Alongside the descriptions of wild animals and frightening isolation, the monks of Stavelot and Malmedy adopted a view of forests and nature as

pastoral. This allowed them to include the human presence in their view of the natural world. Pastoral descriptions and domesticated nature are part of the same continuum as the wild, and the monks actively used all of these in their construction of the “wilderness.”

The natural world that shaped medieval life and culture had room for people, farming, and the tree in the garden. A monastic career could be forged in harsh isolation, by tempting the wild beasts and enduring environmental hardships. But it could also, and at the same time, be supported, nurtured, and irrigated, both through God’s grace and through the work of individual people. One of Malmedy’s hagiographical authors wrote that “in the house of the Lord we will be a *plantatio* (or a deliberately farmed and planted tree), fertile and ornately flowering without end.” Arnold, the archbishop of Cologne, in a letter to Wibald, pointed out that young souls are like new crops: “you shall give [them] irrigation, by which everything that grows increases, so that your plantation will not be destroyed.”¹²²

Human control, manipulation, and reshaping of nature is not only represented by the planting or the felling of trees; it is also represented in the construction of ideas about trees. Medieval monks interpreted forests, nature, and the wilderness in a much more complex and contradictory way than they are usually credited with. Monastic literature idealized the forest not only as wild and isolated but also as domestic and pastoral. Wild nature and domestic nature were clearly linked by the power of God and by his ability to act through the saints. Although there was a boundary of sorts between the wilderness and civilization, it was easily and frequently crossed, and it was not absolute. In spite of monastic expressions of solitude, there was room in the medieval wilderness not only for God, but also for people and human endeavors, which all served God in different ways.

Rather than ignoring human use of nature, medieval authors incorporated it alongside and as a part of their ideas of wild nature, and if we are to fully understand their relationship with their environment, we need to follow their example. Rather than look to monasteries to provide a single view of nature, we should combine the different ideas about nature that the monastic authors created and that coexisted in the same time and place. Stavelot-Malmedy’s example suggests that medieval people may have been much more comfortable than we are with fusing together the tame and the untamed in their view of nature and wilderness. Our understanding of the medieval world will be deepened if we allow the lines to blur between wilderness and domestic nature, the secular and the spiritual, the miraculous and the mundane, and monastic ideal and reality.

Looking closely at the many goals, practices, actions, ideas, and stories from a single monastic community shows that neither (and both) of these ideas were right. The monks of Stavelot-Malmedy had a complicated relationship with nature that was based on their struggles to define and

shape their own identity, and to exert social, political, and, most importantly, religious power over the landscape and people of the Ardennes. Throughout the centuries, monks of the Ardennes developed the idea of the forest as a wild and dangerous landscape because it tied them to their religious heritage. But they had established their monasteries in a landscape that had long been full of people, and they were active participants in the region's social and agricultural structures. Thus, the monks not only had to define themselves in relation to the wild; they also had to define themselves in relation to local people and the domesticated landscape. To do this, they told stories of how the power of the saints and of God allowed the monks to transform the wilderness into a beautiful and controllable landscape. They then, in turn, used this calm and pastoral view of the forest to represent rebirth, tranquility, and the fertility of both land and souls.

This double set of ideas—forests as wilderness and pastoral—is the subject of the next two chapters. [Chapter 1](#) takes a deeper look at the idea of the forest as a dangerous and hostile place. Beginning with foundation accounts (from both legal and religious sources), I explore both the physical and cultural forces that led the monks to imagine their forests as a place of trial, temptation, and solitude. This chapter also addresses some of the difficulties in using legal sources and vocabulary through a discussion of the term *forestis*—was it, by definition, a wood or a wasteland? Multiple terms and definitions encouraged the monks to nurture multiple ideas about the natural world that surrounded them—including seeing it as pastoral and nurturing. These ideas are explored in [Chapter 2](#), which shifts focus to the ways that the Ardennes supported agriculture and the many ways the monks used woodland resources to support their economic goals. This monastic familiarity with the domesticated landscape led to stories that viewed the forests as beautiful and that showed the saints protecting monastic resources.

This saintly protection was necessary because the monks and their dependents faced many conflicts over their properties, both from local and regional competitors. The monasteries felt the same forces that threatened the agricultural and economic stability of their dependents, and they tried to protect their human and material resources from natural and human-made threats. [Chapter 3](#) focuses on the numerous conflicts that the monks faced over control of their forests and the secular strategies that they used to protect their territories. They also had religious strategies—the monks controlled religious stories, which they deployed in part to protect land, win conflicts, and present a morality of land and resource use. This power to shape narratives extended to the ability to invent and imagine conflicts, and [Chapter 4](#) explores two specific monastic conflict narratives involving forests. Religious and normative sources used together demonstrate how the monastic environmental imagination was connected to the specifics of local history and local conflicts.

The final chapter pulls these themes together to show how the monasteries created a religious landscape—one in which monastic power, ideology, and religious identity were inscribed onto the people and natural world. The first step of that process was that of religious conversion—both of the individuals living in the Ardennes and of the environment itself. But the process could not and did not end there. The monks also needed to establish and maintain the importance of their own monasteries within the newly Christianized area, and to expand their influence as far as possible. Landowners and laborers paid taxes and religious tithes to the monasteries, attended religious services and feast day celebrations, and sent the fruits of their labor to the monastery. The monks built religious landmarks, brought the saints out into the communities, and recorded miracles that associated the saints with specific sites throughout the Ardennes. The forests, fields, waters, and towns of the Ardennes were intertwined with the religious fears and hopes of not only the monks, but also the broader Christian community.

Monks interacted with and attempted to control and regulate the natural and human-made landscapes of medieval Europe, and the resulting administrative record greatly expands our knowledge about medieval Europe's physical surroundings. But other monastic sources and projects reveal that landscape was not only experienced physically: it was also drawn into the monastic world of religion and miracle. By imagining connections to the idealized "desert" and to paradise, the monks tied themselves to broader Christian culture. But by telling stories that reflected real places, they tried to anchor their stories in their local landscape. The monks of the Ardennes used the saints and their presence in the natural world to connect the tangible and the intangible, the living and the dead, heaven and earth, ideas and experience.

Chapter 1

kings and other secular concerns. Solitude was a moral buffer; it implied the absence of dangerous secular concerns and the ability of the monks to be “undisturbed” in their religious goals. Though Sigibert’s charter suggests that their forest location placed the monks in danger from the wild animals inhabiting the area, this threat was very clearly counterbalanced by the absence of the moral threat posed by exposure to the secular world. The forest/desert allowed the monks to live in solitude, “guarding against the dangers to their souls and shunning the company of women... so that in the absence of the press of the people or of the tumultuous affairs of the world, they might be without anything but God alone.”⁴

Subsequent administrative documents perpetuated this idea of solitude. A charter from 652/653 again described the Ardennes as an “empty desert.”⁵ Around 744, King Childeric III referred to the Ardennes as a forest in which Stavelot and Malmedy sheltered a “host of many monks... seeking peace and tranquility.”⁶ This brings up another complex point when dealing with charters—whose interests, worldview, and language do charters reflect? Participants and recipients of charters could be just as active in their production as the king or his scribes. Karl Heidecker has pointed to a shift in studies of “sovereign charters” away from an “approach that sees charters mainly as expressions of royal issuers” and toward a reevaluation of the role of the recipient, “who also wanted the charter to express something.”⁷ These charters can thus be seen as the earliest expressions of a rhetoric of solitude that the monks of Stavelot-Malmedy created and maintained well into the twelfth century. Yet still other charters reveal the deep degree to which the monks were also concerned with the settled, secular aspects of monastic life in the Ardennes, recording numerous conflicts between the growing monastic populations and local communities. As a result, charters only rarely repeated such statements of isolation. Instead, over the next several centuries, the ideas of solitude were inherited and transformed by religious narrative sources.

Monastic Foundations in the Wilderness

As Remacle and the Merovingian foundation faded from living memory, the monasteries began to actively promote their founder and their own history. The first retelling of the monasteries’ early history was a biography or *vita* of St. Remacle, written around 850 (the *vita prima*).⁸ Its discussion of the monastic foundation in particular is based quite extensively on the early Merovingian charters. In language that itself feels like a diplomatic record, the *vita* describes King Sigibert and Grimoald (his mayor of the palace) as the initiators of the foundation. These nobles ensured that “through the will of God and the counsel of their *optimati*, the monasteries were built within the forest (*forestis*) located in the pagus called the Ardennes; [these

monasteries] were named Stavelot and Malmedy, in which religious monks could stay and there spiritually serve Christ.”⁹ The anonymous author (a monk from Stavelot) then reported that only once the king had built and dedicated the church at Stavelot did he send for Remacle, who was then serving as the bishop of Tongres. Since it closely followed Sigibert’s charter, the *vita prima* depicts the foundation of Stavelot and Malmedy as an act of royal initiative, a reminder that monastic identities were not products of only monastic interests. Monarchs also had reasons to found and support monasteries, to control monastic reform and (as Stavelot’s history shows) choose monastic leaders.

According to this account, Remacle appears to have been a “starter abbot.” He originally intended to return to Tongres, but “after a very short time,” he “petitioned the king that he be allowed to relinquish his pontifical seat to his successor, so that, as he had long desired, he could go to this deserted space (*eremus locus*), and there, remote from men, [live] without anything but God.”¹⁰ By focusing on this decision, the author of the *vita prima* was able to begin the process of disassociating Stavelot and Malmedy from the royal mission and from episcopal oversight and linking them more closely to monastic goals and identity.

The author of the ninth-century *vita prima* was not simply inventing a Merovingian past; he instead converted the royal charter to serve monastic purposes. This can be seen in the way that the language reflects (though does not copy) that of the founding charter, for example in passages describing the donation of “twelve *leugas*” of land to the monastery.¹¹ Whereas the royal charter defines this act as an attempt to forestall conflict with other people, the *vita prima* reports that the boundary meant that within that area the monks would encounter no one. The author then explains that Remacle considered the site to be an empty place, a place of hermitage, where “having observed the flattering enticements of the world, [the monks] could live withdrawn from secular cares.”¹²

The promotion of the ideal of solitude is still found a century later in the *vita Remacii*, written in the late 900s by Heriger of Lobbes (d. 1007), who based his work on the charters and the *vita prima* and also made significant alterations to the narrative. Heriger, an active monastic leader who was perhaps also concerned about the growing tenth-century tensions between clergy and local lords, revived and perpetuated the solitude *topos*. He did this in part through descriptions of the environment as inhospitable and isolated. Stavelot was “confined by mountains,” and construction of buildings at Malmedy was “impeded by the swamps.” The idea of physical solitude was reinforced by the absence of people; local populations were “not fully established,” and there were only remnants of the former inhabitants, who had been “bound up in idolatry.” These unnamed people had constructed a hostile pagan landscape full of temples and effigies, and for Remacle and the monks, the ghostly presence of the former residents was as much a tangible

obstacle as the swamps.¹³

Heriger's *vita* also includes a discussion of Remacle's earlier (failed) attempt at founding a monastery at Cugnon. As with Stavelot-Malmedy, the earliest mention of Cugnon is from a seventh-century royal charter, which reports that Sigibert III decided to found a regular monastery "in honor of our patrons Peter, Paul, John, and the other martyrs, in our lands, the *silva Ardenense*, at a place called Cugnon, surrounded by the Semois River."¹⁴ Although the *vita prima* passes over the foundation of Cugnon in silence, the *vita Remacii* does mention it, noting that it was "a place that was seen to be well-suited for monastic life."¹⁵ This ideal site "located in the harsh mountains" and "on the soil of the Ardennes" was surrounded by a river and "carved out of the rocks."¹⁶ Both the charter and the *vita*, though written centuries apart, emphasize the location of the monastery—surrounded by a river and a forest, cut off from the secular world. But this proposed foundation appears never to have been actualized—only the single charter survives, preserved as a part of Stavelot-Malmedy's records, and excavations have yielded no evidence of a monastic complex.¹⁷ Yet though the foundation failed, in the tenth century the place remained, according to Heriger, a "place of prayer."¹⁸

Heriger also emphasized the importance of solitude in another of his works, the *vita Hadalini*, on a monastic founder who was a contemporary of Remacle's. This work briefly describes the early history of Stavelot-Malmedy: "after [Remacle] had established his monasteries and had gathered monks to him, he built a great housing unit ideal for monastic use" where the monks could always follow "a life of prayer and solitude."¹⁹ Remacle also instructed Hadalinus to build his own monastery, Chelles, "in the valley that is next to the forest (*saltus*) near the Letia river," at a place called "between the four mountains." Life there was predictably harsh; isolated by the mountains and the forest, Hadalinus cleared a space in this deserted landscape, working through hunger and thirst, in the cold and in utter poverty.²⁰ Thus, though the forest in its broadest sense provided isolation and protection, it could also be dangerous, and fit to be cleared and "converted" and used by the monks for their own purposes.

The association of Stavelot-Malmedy's local landscape with physical and social isolation, so prominent in the foundation charter and the early legends, is still found during Wibald's abbacy, another period of broader regional turbulence and monastic consolidation. There is a difference, however; whereas the earliest foundation stories explicitly presented the isolation of the forest/desert/wilderness as a means of perfecting monastic purpose, this idealization of the retreat was so ingrained by the twelfth century that Wibald was able to indicate this complex set of ideas in a type of rhetorical shorthand. Yet it is at this point that Stavelot-Malmedy was arguably the most connected to other parts of Europe and the world. Urbanization in the Low Countries, ties of local leaders to the

internationalizing force of the crusades, participation in regional synods, and monastic bonds to a monarchy now centered to the West all exposed the houses to more people than ever before. A widely traveled and by no means isolated leader, Wibald nevertheless clearly associated isolation from the world with the ultimate goal of a religious life (though one he himself could not realize).

Wibald used the inherited tradition of woodland isolation as an extension of the desert in order to manipulate his readers into thinking of his noted absences as an extension of his larger commitment to the monastic ideal. For example, he used it to avoid a trip to Rome with Archbishop Arnold of Cologne. First, he noted, he had been busy with local political concerns. He also reminded Arnold of the danger of the trip to Rome; he himself had “often been thrown into incredible dangers” en route. Finally, he wrote that he would gladly meet Arnold in Saxony in late August, but at the present he was unwilling and unable to leave his isolated location. “With us being fixed in our ancient woodland solitude,” he wrote, “these pleasant religious duties rarely come to [our] attention.”²¹ Despite this isolation, in another letter Wibald told the bishop of Havelberg that if the papal chancellor were ever to demand his presence, he would drop everything to go to Rome and arrive “at his feet,” even if he had decided never again to visit Rome because he was “living in the most remote desert.”²²

The Value of Danger in the Landscape

A long-settled, mountainous, and forested region such as the Ardennes could in fact be a desert. Because of their relative separation from the royal court and urban life the monks could easily feel that, in the midst of a settled landscape, they lived in comparative isolation, and faced a dangerous wilderness. Heriger’s work provides another tie to the ancient desert wilderness: fear. In the *vita Remacii*, he reports that in the earliest stages of foundation, the monks were often frightened by the roars of unseen wild animals. Full of horror, they fled to Remacle, who told them that the animals were tied to the devil, and represented temptation. He explained that the devil was “like a lion in a cave,” lying in wait to deter men from their purposes, and that withstanding their fear of the animals would give them strength.²³

And there was real reason to fear the forest; the residents of the Ardennes and their livestock faced wild animals and human predators, groups that monastic sources unsurprisingly equated with one another. The real dangers faced by the monks and their dependents led to an escalated rhetoric of danger. Vito Fumagalli argued that terror in the face of forests and wild animals was a key part of medieval responses to nature. He called this the “landscape of fear,” arguing that early medieval culture was

dominated by large, remote wildernesses and that “people were swallowed up in a countryside which was still largely untamed and had vast expanses of wilderness everywhere.” Perhaps too swept up in monastic language, he pictured the forest as a dynamic enemy to civilization, and “trees, bushes and undergrowth everywhere encroached on and smothered the ruins of long-deserted towns and villages.”²⁴

Danger did not deter the monks from seeking out the forest; danger was a draw. And from the moment they first appear in the historical record, the Ardennes are big, dark, and dangerous. In the first century b.c., Caesar described the “forest of the Ardennes, which is of great size”²⁵ as a dangerous and hostile landscape, dominated by dense trees, swamps, and thickets of underbrush broken only occasionally by small clearings and glens where farmers clung to a tenuous existence. Only narrow paths cut through the dense trees that hid enemies and prevented easy travel. He wrote that the Germans “had settled where a hidden valley or a wooded locality (*locus silvestris*) or an entangled morass offered some hope of defense or security,” and “the woods forbade the advance of any close-formed body [of troops] along the hidden and uncertain tracks.”²⁶ Tacitus explained that the Germans “plant themselves separately and individually at some favorite spring or plain or grove.” The Germans had “sacred woods and groves,” but the forests were also fortresses. Though he did not specifically discuss the Ardennes, like Caesar, he described the Northern forests as a protection for the Germanic warriors, sheltered by “ramparts of forest or river.”²⁷

These impressions of an imposing environment are not merely products of Mediterranean minds. The medieval Ardennes were in many ways similar to those of the modern period; one imagines that Caesar’s troops were often as miserable, frightened, and cold as those entrenched in the Battle of the Bulge. The landscape—dominated by steep mountains, dense forests, and rivers prone to flooding—could be a source of discomfort, fear, and even actual danger. For the Ardennes are rainy, foggy, and cold, with winds that race through the narrow river valleys. They can also be dangerously cold; Wibald’s correspondence includes a list of herbs from the Ardennes that were used as a medicinal treatment for chilblains, and the *vita Popponis* tells the story of a leper who risked dying of exposure. In the style of Martin, Poppo covered the man with his own cloak, after which the leper “sweated out” his leprosy.²⁸ The medieval sources bundle together descriptions of winter, darkness, and cold, all of which seem to outweigh other weather features. The *Passio* praised Agilolf for his ability to endure “many passions: hunger, vigils, cold, thirst, and the reproach of envy!”²⁹

The area around Stavelot is the coldest and wettest region in Belgium, and the early Middle Ages saw recurring “hundred year winters,” strong enough to kill people, trees, vines, and animals; create famines; freeze major European bodies of water; and trigger health crises. Stavelot’s annals record two of these: in 972 there was an unusually harsh winter, and 872 saw “a

most severe winter, floods, an earthquake, and, in certain places, plagues of locusts.”³⁰ Other chronicles name 873 as the year with the worst of the weather: plagues of locusts preceded a winter that defied all expectations and experiences. Hincmar of Reims wrote that the winter was “long and strong, and the snow was spread about in a quantity such as no one could remember ever seeing.”³¹

Annalists in Xanten and Fulda also remembered 872, reporting that the summer was full of devastating storms. The author of the *Translatio Quirini* describes a night when “there were enormous winds, drenching rain, and the crash of thunder, from the morning to the sixth hour of the day.”³² The potential intensity of the weather is most clearly seen in the story of a storm so remarkable that it was recorded several times in miracle stories from Saint-Hubert. The first account, from about 850, describes a storm “So great that [its] monstrous fury... could not be satisfied except through the nearcomplete devastation of some of the nearby surrounding places.” Frightened for their immediate safety as well as their future livelihoods, the residents of the nearby village went to the monastery and the abbot led them in prayer at the saint’s tomb. When the prayers were finished, the author reports that “it happened that without any delay, the strength of the storm was then ended, and the darkness of the dense clouds, broken through by the radiant beams of the sun, was soon brightened.”³³

The second collection of Hubert’s miracles was written around 1050, and parallels but significantly rewrites the stories from the first collection, either expanding upon or reducing the amount of detail. The second description of the storm adds several significant details, including dating it to the year 837,³⁴ which suggests that the monks were interested in presenting this storm as a real historic event, with the hope that the story would resonate with other peoples’ own experiences and fears, perhaps also spurring them on to penitence and support of the saint. In this retelling, the storm is still associated with anger, but the religious message is even stronger. The storm is not personified; rather, the anger is attributed to God. “It so happened,” this version begins, “that the furious anger of divine punishment was raging, and the greatest weight of that fury was put on the areas surrounding Saint-Hubert.”³⁵

The association between uncontrollable weather and the will of God to punish or reward is a common theme in miracle literature. The ensuing description, however, is not generic, and instead seems to seek verisimilitude with the audience’s experiences: “so enormous were the torrential rainstorms and so ferocious the savagery of the storms, that it was enough [that the crop] was either torn out by the roots or weighted down to the ground, and because of the danger of hunger, death reached out menacingly to everyone.” Again, the story moves to the monastery, where the locals pray at the saint’s tomb, and “immediately, through the radiance of the sun, the torrent of the rains stopped, and for a long time afterwards, all of the

different places suffered no damages from the storm.”³⁶

This description’s emphasis on agricultural damages is further suggestion that the monks were interested in presenting a miraculous world that paralleled their lived environment. Fears of hail- and thunderstorms during the Carolingian period were very real, and frequently linked to agricultural risk; the cereal crops typical of Northern Europe were vulnerable to this weather, and this fear often led to attempts to avoid or prevent storm damages.³⁷ The ninth century was also marked by an attempt by church leaders to show divine rather than human control of nature, and to redefine their authority in the wake of Carolingian reforms. And so the monks of Saint-Hubert invoked the type of storm that local groups in the Ardennes may have faced and dreaded, and then demonstrated that it could be both caused and stopped by God and his saint.

The miracles of Saint-Hubert also contain a second story about a sudden hailstorm that models how the monks imposed their own interpretations over natural phenomena. God could use nature to punish as well as protect. An army crossing through the Ardennes ransacked a village associated with Saint-Hubert: “when the horses sent out immoderately had destroyed the pastures, and the inhabitants, having lost any hope of being able to feed their own animals, had suffered, [the soldiers] did not leave them with only this pain; instead they also violently broke into their houses, and seized all of the foodstuffs that were inside them.” The soldiers then set up camp, and “the servants of the church petitioned their patron for help against this injury, and suddenly the covering heavens resounded terribly, and the greatest of storms bore down.”³⁸

The storm soon completely darkened the sky and a sudden downpour inundated the encamped army; the soldiers risked being swept away by the torrential rain, and “fleeing with their shields over their heads to prevent colliding with the hail stones, they were scattered.” The army had to beg forgiveness of the villagers and seek shelter in their houses, and as morning broke, they left “quickly and fearfully” only to discover that all but two of their horses had been killed in the storm. This miracle again ties a local storm to divine protection and allowed the monks of the Ardennes to link control of a wild and dangerous nature to monastic and saintly protection of an agricultural landscape.

Weather could also be associated directly with living saints. One of the best-known experiences of weather in the Ardennes is that of St. Lambert, the evangelizing bishop of Liège, who spent several years (from 674 to 681) in temporary exile at Stavelot. During one winter, Lambert stood nightly vigils, which were recorded in two hagiographical works, both of which emphasize the cold, wet winter nights that Stavelot’s monks routinely experienced. Lambert’s biographer noted that the saint penitently endured the weather, standing in front of the cross in the middle of the night, “naked and shuddering in the cold of winter.”³⁹ In the *vita Remacii*, Heriger claims

that Lambert scorned the weather, standing in the middle of the night “saying psalms and prayers, in contempt of the cold and with his feet shod in snow.”⁴⁰ Though the barefoot penitent is of course a standard medieval image, this iteration of it became a fixture of Stavelot’s lore. Lambert’s life provided a model for withstanding the trials of nature. His death then became a reminder of the reason that dangerous landscapes were not only feared but also valued as a means of proving religious strength. Heriger wrote that in the end, Lambert’s spiritual excellence was signified by his “stormy martyrdom.”⁴¹

Danger and martyrdom were also part of most prominent monastic image of danger from the forest: wild animals. Wild animals were central to Sigibert’s 648 description of the Ardennes, retained their importance in Carolingian hagiography, and were still an active part of the monastic imagination in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Fear of these wild animals, both real and imagined, loomed large: in charters and hagiographical materials alike, readers encounter wolves, lions, bears, and unnamed wild beasts. There were many standard metaphors in Christianity that tied animals to moral, religious, and political ideas. These “animal exemplars” appeared in bestiaries, biblical commentaries, encyclopedias, and other writings. By discussing animals as part of Stavelot’s environmental imagination, I am not arguing that the monks were unique in equating wolves, lions, or sheep with people and moral ideas. It is important to recognize that they were building on, and at times elaborating on, a common well of imagery, and that these images recur frequently and vividly over five centuries of sources.⁴² My goal here is to explore the examples employed within this single set of sources, and, specifically, to show how these uses relate to the idea of wilderness and to fear of the forest environment.

The presence of wild animals, both dangerous and docile, was one of the hallmarks of medieval forests; bears, wolves, boar, beaver, deer, squirrels, and many other animals dwelled in the forests, using the trees as shelter and the rivers and glades for nourishment, part of what has been described as an early medieval world of “vigorous animality.”⁴³ Archaeology reinforces textual impressions; in the Ardennes, excavations have yielded remains from deer, roe deer, boars, foxes, and possibly aurochs. A single deposit at Wellin, inhabited as early as A.D. 650, produced bones from boar, deer, roe deer, fox, and sparrow-hawk.⁴⁴

No wolf bones have been excavated in the Ardennes, and there are no medieval records of wolf numbers for the region, but comparative evidence suggests that the medieval Ardennes would have sheltered many wolves.⁴⁵ Charlemagne’s wolf-hunters were given instructions in the capitulary *De Villis*, and a bishop of Metz wrote to the emperor, boasting about killing more than a hundred wolves.⁴⁶ Whatever their actual numbers, wolves dominated the imagination of the monks of Stavelot (even though in this period, the direct link between Remacle and the wolf that is celebrated today

was not yet established). In part, this discrepancy is due to a broader human fear of wolves that is unconnected to the degree of threat they pose. Wolves rarely attack people. Instead, as Jon Coleman has argued, because they pose a threat to sheep, deer, and the human use of animal resources, they are *perceived* as dangerous and monstrous.⁴⁷ Because wolves were imagined to be a threat, the monks told vivid stories of actual and metaphoric wolves attacking people and threatening the monastic lifestyle.

The *vita Popponis* (ca. 1060), for example, includes a detailed story of a wolf attack. Its author (or authors—see handlist) ascribes a malicious intent to the wild animal, invoking the fear that people, daily exposed to danger, might have had of the randomness of the wilderness. “Behold!” the author commanded, “a wolf, then thirsting for human blood made an attack from out of the dark forest haunts, and violently seized a shepherd who had been grazing his flock in the area and dragged him by his defenseless neck to a distant place that was fit for his foul desires.”⁴⁸ Unfortunately, the search party sent out into the swamps arrived too late, and they were “unable find any traces of life in the man, nor did they see the wolf anywhere.”⁴⁹

The sources from Stavelot abound with saints and abbots described as shepherds protecting the flocks of the faithful from spiritual danger, represented by wolves. Sometimes, these messages are cursory and abbreviated, such as Wibald’s request for papal support, “lest the errant sheep be torn apart in the jaws of the wolves.”⁵⁰ But some of the sources elaborate on the theme, highlighting the ferocity of the wolves and the flexibility of biblical images. In the *vita Remacii*, Heriger invented dying words for the saint, who tells his monks, “I fear for you, lest, if the rapacious wolves were to come at you, there would be no one who could repel them from you.”⁵¹ Heriger also wrote that monks, “the most brave fighters for Christ, not wishing to be bound fast inside the peace of the cloister, spring forward, lain bare, into the field of battle; so that they might not be made deserters from the spiritual battle, nor be like mercenaries fleeing at the sight of a wolf.”⁵²

Wibald acknowledged that the wolf was a metaphor for danger, fear, and even the wilderness. During a period in which he was struggling with maintaining three houses, and wrapped up in several political struggles, Wibald described the many problems and dangers faced by the church of Stavelot. Mixing his metaphors, he wrote: “We saw therefore not one single wolf approaching (unless perhaps we recognize one wolf as the entire phalanx of demons) but countless armies of many wolves, which were holding their gaping mouths open with wild rage for the purpose of devouring the church of Stavelot and the greater part of Lotharingia. But God sent the holy spirit from the heavens and closed the mouth of the lion.”⁵³ Of course, these examples draw on common Christian associations of religious care and leadership with the guardianship of a shepherd over his flock. However, these passages, like sections of *vitae* that contain quotations

of other Christian works, cannot be ignored or eliminated as derivative. Although some biblical citations were arguably archaisms or citations of older ideas perhaps no longer relevant, the Bible was a living and vibrant part of contemporary medieval culture and a source that could be used by medieval writers at will to express numerous and often conflicting ideas. Though a universal symbol, the wolf was clearly meaningful for the monks, as they chose to use it in many different contexts. There were many older religious and literary images that could be borrowed or employed by medieval writers, and it is worth paying attention to the monks' selection and frequent use of this particular metaphor.

And the wolf was an exceptionally good metaphor. The wolf represented alien threats and dangers. Bestiaries, which became increasingly prominent in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries but were based on earlier works, reported that the wolf was "a ravenous beast, and thirsts for blood." The wolf was, moreover, "the devil, who is always envious of mankind, and continually prowls round the sheepfolds of the Church's believers, to kill their souls and corrupt them."⁵⁴ In a tense exchange between Wibald and Robert, the deacon of Stavelot at a moment of crisis, the wolf became the vehicle for airing fears and criticisms. Robert, urging Wibald not to abandon the monastery, chided him that "a wolf having been seen, a good pastor would never abandon his pastoral office."⁵⁵ Wibald responded to this direct challenge, taking up the metaphor and extending it: "As to that which you wrote, moreover, because 'a wolf having been seen, a good pastor would never abandon his pastoral office,' your experience ought to recall how many, how great, what savage wolves [I] have pulled down while being in charge of Stavelot these past twenty years, which I have borne up not without the risk of mortal danger, grave scandals, and reproach." He then added that (in part because of the political complexity of his assumption of control of Corvey), he could not serve only Stavelot, "since wolves are not lacking in the church of Corvey, and a pastor who is both present and vigilant is also necessary there."⁵⁶ This is but one of many times that Wibald felt that he was spread too thin, as seen in his comment that "pulled in many directions, I hold the wolf by the ears."⁵⁷

The wolf also represented the perceived boundary between men and animals. When Poppo heard of the shepherd attacked by the wolf, he was mortified by the violence of the attack, and prayed to God for the life of "this man who was made in your image and likeness [and] is now the prey of a wolf."⁵⁸ In the *Miracula Remacii*, the existence of this divide is reinforced by its transgression. In a sign of divine displeasure and disorder, "wolves and bears had been violently breaking into the city of Vienne, devouring many people throughout the entire year."⁵⁹ Wild animals threatened human life and violated the established border between the wilderness and civilization. Bestiaries from the twelfth century help provide insight into the interpretive context of such comments, connecting Stavelot-Malmedy's sources to wider

monastic ideas. Wolves represented a boundary of sorts between the wild and the domestic, as some bestiaries include discussions of how the wolf “loses its wildness” to become doglike. Additionally, in at least one bestiary, the dog is the animal that follows the description of the wolf.⁶⁰

Powerful as such monastic images are, it is important to remember that the forests were filled not only with animals, but also with people. The frequent association of the ferocity of wild animals with danger carried over into representations of humans who posed danger to the monasteries as having beastly characteristics. As but one example of many, the eleventh-century *Passio* describes the enemy guards who kill Agilolf as animals gnashing their teeth and thirsting for blood.⁶¹ Aside from the spiritual danger of general consort with society, expressed in the desire for isolation, the monks faced specific threats from inimical people. The forest did not create true isolation, but its relative isolation from the main routes to larger communities and justice encouraged both planned and spontaneous criminality.

This was clearly linked to the main dichotomy of monastic settlement; though the monks strove to build in sites that were or appeared to be geographically isolated, the growing houses were closely tied to the local and regional economic framework and were wealthy and well endowed. This made monasteries prime targets for both minor and major theft, and the monastic concern with this is reflected in a multitude of stories. The Ardennes were crossed by several major roads, but since there were only a handful of options, and since these roadways were often flanked by forests or other inhospitable environments, travelers were vulnerable. Interestingly, many of these examples cluster around the year 1000, perhaps reflecting the possibility that Ardennes houses were affected by the increasing criminality that led to the Peace of God movement.

One case of highway crime in the Ardennes was immortalized in the tenth-century *vita* of saint Evermarus (d. ca. 700), who was killed near Tongres on his way to visit Remacle’s tomb at Stavelot. Allegedly, a brigand stopped Evermarus on the road, chased him through the forest, and killed him and his companions. Their bodies were then found by one of King Pippin’s royal hunters and buried in a woodland chapel. Two centuries later, the relics were translated, which occasioned the composition of the *vita*.⁶² The rigors and dangers of travel are also found in the eleventh-century *Translatio Quirini*, whose author wrote that the monks suffered exhaustion and hunger on the road, surviving storms and “extending many efforts, and also enduring as many thieves and fears of the road.”⁶³

One morning the monks took to the road amidst a gathering of exultant locals. But, “they had scarcely traveled four *milia* before their rejoicing turned into sorrow.”⁶⁴ Having heard a rumor that the monks were carrying worldly riches along with the relics, some men “all conspired as one to seize violently the monastic treasures.” But the would-be thieves, “inspired by

devilish purposes,” were foiled by God, who “sent amongst them such a great fog that they were separated from one another and in no way able to succeed.” Though in this case the sudden appearance of a fog protected the monks, the story shows how weather and landscape could create spaces for evildoing; had it not been a divine boon, the blanket of fog might just as easily have allowed the thieves to act with impunity. The author directly compares this event to one of the great desert miracles of the flight from Egypt, adding that “using the fog as a servant, [God] saved [our] patron from the midst of an enemy people.” Invoking Egypt was not unexpected: the twelfth-century life of St. Bernard of Tiron equates the European forest explicitly with the biblical wilderness: “But there were in the border region between Maine and Brittany vast wildernesses (*regionis vaste solitudines*) which at that time flourished like a second Egypt with a multitude of hermits.”⁶⁵

The later compositional phases of the *Miracula Remacii*, composed around 1040 during Poppo’s abbacy, contain numerous examples of thieves (who were, of course, ultimately caught through the saint’s intervention). Some of the thefts were of animals and agricultural products, but in other cases, more valuable goods were stolen. Some crimes took place on the road, for example when people bringing tithes to the monasteries were attacked en route. Other crimes occurred in the monasteries, as was the case when a cleric arrived at Stavelot as a newcomer. This stranger, the author claims, went to the monastery specifically to win the monks’ trust and rob them of their treasures. This man purportedly chose Stavelot because “the very solitude of the monastery aided him.”⁶⁶ The miraculous protection of the monks against theft may also be connected to eleventh-century critiques of monastic wealth associated with monastic reforms.

Several of the hagiographical sources present the forests of the Ardennes as a shelter or haven for not just thieves, but also enemy troops. At Stavelot, this theme seems to have developed primarily as a response to the ninth-century Viking raids. The second book of the *Miracula Remacii* presents the Vikings as immoral, pestiferous, and a form of divine punishment. One of the compilers wrote that “our wickedness, I believe... called down God’s scourge.” He then described how the Vikings prepared a great fleet, came to France, and put the entire region to the flames. They then swept across the Mosel and “burst forth into the forest of the Ardennes” where everything became “the barbarians’ prey.”⁶⁷

Finally, the Vikings approached Stavelot in the cover of darkness, creeping up through the forests. The *Miracula* present the subsequent events as a study in the contrast between the light and dark (and good and evil). “The assault was raging in the dead of night,” the author notes, and the frightened monks went out into the night, blinded by the stormy darkness. The power of the darkness to harm the monks and aid their enemies was palpable, yet at almost the same time, the voice of God said, “because the

twisted thing hates the light being carried about, this is your hour.” When the monks, bearing Remacle’s body, reached a nearby mountain called the Alnos, they rested. A miraculous column of fire descended on the spot, and the relics started to glow “like the moon.” Suddenly the monks felt as if they were basking “under summer’s light” and hot steam warmed up the winter night.⁶⁸ This divine light protected the monks, and was a direct contrast to the dark forests that protected the Vikings.

Stavelot was not alone in this; Regino of Prüm’s tenth-century chronicle also discusses the role that the Ardennes played in the Viking attacks. He reported that in 882 the Vikings traveled through the Ardennes and attacked Prüm for three days. His account of the subsequent attack on Prüm in February 892 describes how the Vikings moved through the woods to approach and attack the monastery. The entire congregation, including the abbot, fled. After their sudden appearance out of the forest, the Vikings “destroyed everything, killed a few of the monks, slaughtered the greater part of the servants, and made the rest captives.”⁶⁹ Then they returned into the forest, where they destroyed newly constructed fortifications. Regino also described an attack in which the Vikings disappeared “into the woods and swamps next to the palace at Aachen.”⁷⁰ The ability of the Viking groups to travel, unimpeded, through the forests and surprise the monks is presented as a clear reason to fear the local landscape. According to another legend, the monks of Saint-Omer even once cleared an entire forest because they feared that their attackers would be able to use it to sneak up on the monastery.⁷¹

Although of arguably little lasting material importance, the Viking raids remained present in monastic imagination, and the fear of barbarian attack remained part of monastic rhetoric and reality for the next century. Then, in 954 the Hungarians swept down through the Ardennes and attacked Malmedy. This renewed threat of external attack and the constant presence of warring and feuding local powers served to keep the fear expressed in the *Miracula Remaculi* ever-present, and later monastic enemies would be depicted in language similar to the reports of the Vikings. The forest, where wild animals, armed men, and even the devil lurked in the darkness, could be a frightening place where monks faced physical and spiritual dangers. The monks lived in a natural setting that, though potentially dangerous, was also nurturing and life-bringing. The monks experienced both hardship and beauty in their forests.

Wibald’s letters include the proverb “if it is cold, sit in front of the fire; if it is hot, under the shade.”⁷² Life in the Ardennes was full of natural opposites: cold and heat, winter and summer, wild and domestic, day and night—but God and the saints could overcome the natural boundaries between these opposite conditions. At one of the places where Quirin’s relics rested on their trip to Malmedy, “the grass kept its greenness eternally; it was neither burned by summer’s heat nor taken away by winter’s freeze.”⁷³

And on the cold winter night of the Viking attack, the saint glowed like the summer.

Defining the Medieval Forest: Waste, Resource, or Wilderness?

The monks used images of isolation and danger to construct an idea of the forest as a desert wilderness where they could struggle to shape their identity. Most of this wilderness idea was based on the construction of a space free of people; yet the dangers posed by enemies and criminals suggest that even this idea needed a foil. Without people to avoid, the idea of the forest as solitude lost much of its force. The forest was a site of temptation, after all, and as the monks came in contact with the secular world, they added new stories to those of the forest as desert. It should therefore not come as a surprise that when we shift from the miraculous to the mundane, we are faced with both a similar range of ways of describing and discussing forested landscapes and a struggle over whether forests were wasteland or useful. The *saltus*, for example, is often seen as a no-man's-land, linking it (and subsequently most forest and woodland words) into the discussion of the "forest wilderness." Wilderness (medieval and otherwise) is a concept that stretches past settlement questions or aesthetics into issues of ownership and legal status, and discussion of use of "marginal" or "waste" lands is central to the legal, political, and proprietary discussions of the history of woods and wilderness.

The blurring of several ways of seeing forests led to the development of multiple sets of vocabulary to describe forests as place, resource, and even as abstract idea. There are numerous Latin terms that were used during the Middle Ages that denoted, to some extent, forests or woodlands, including *silva*, *nemus*, *saltus*, *boscus*, and *waldus*. The sources from Stavelot and Malmedy contain several of these: *saltus*, *nemus*, and, most commonly, *silva* and *forestis*. Stavelot-Malmedy's charters also apply forest words flexibly—even at times casually. The range and interchangeability of these words suggests that for the medieval participants, the choice of words was not determined solely by strict technical or legal definitions. In Stavelot's early documents, labeling words did not have precise, legal definitions, and could be substituted readily for one another in similar contexts. This discouraged the development of concrete, universal definitions for forests and woodlands, and instead encouraged medieval writers to develop other ways to describe them.

Though much effort has been spent trying to pin it down, the exact relationship between these words remains elusive and ambiguous. Forest historians interested in ecological and landscape history have tried to find

ways of differentiating between medieval words in an attempt to ascertain the degree of medieval forest cover. Others focusing on the study of charters and other legal documents expect (and want) to find a legal precision in words. Both of these directions privilege precision and work to avoid or clarify ambiguities in the written record. Yet I think the ambiguities need to be better understood on their own as reflections of the fact that forests and woodlands served many interests. Medieval forest vocabulary is mutable, nuanced, and ambiguous due to several different competing forces that are worth notice: local particularism versus state-sponsored standardization, official chancery language versus literary Latin, legal precision versus rhetorical aims, and even noble interest in hunting versus monastic interest in supporting an agrarian economy.

It is the broader contexts of sources that provide the meaning, not just the specific terms themselves. Even in charter contexts, “technical” words could be manipulated and substituted and rearranged. In charters, other phrases and additional qualifiers were used to add specificity, and in narrative sources flexible vocabulary could be used to enhance metaphors, blur boundaries between different ideas about forests, and provide variety of tone. Acknowledging that forest words could lack precision can also make us more comfortable dealing with a similar lack of specificity in medieval concepts of the “definition” and “value” of resources and landscapes.

In part because of the importance of England’s Forest Law and of modern ideas of state-sponsored forestry, scholars of medieval legal and woodland history have tried to work out precise meanings for forest terms (especially *forestis*) and to construct a history of their legal applications.⁷⁴ There are certainly contexts in which medieval terminology had legal, definite, and precise meanings, and this is an important aspect to understanding the development of medieval states, languages, and economies. Yet it is also important to recognize that not all terms had legal precision at all times or in all contexts.

As has been pointed out in recent studies of vocabulary relating to castles, the imprecision of some medieval vocabulary could be a strength, allowing an ambiguity of meaning to reflect flexibility of practice and experience. In his revisionist approach to castle history, Matthew Johnson pointed out that the “search for a tight definition or classification of species or subspecies of form is unhelpful. There is no one essential category of ‘castle.’ It was a fluid idea in the medieval mind.”⁷⁵ This fluidity and uncertainty is not always something we’re comfortable with when we encounter it in medieval history, yet it is present throughout the sources: “it is not only medieval notions of space that are characterized by imprecision and approximation. As we shall see, time was measured in an even more capricious way. In general, with regard to quantitative terms—measures of weight, capacity, numbers of people, dates, etc.—arbitrariness and imprecision were the norm.”⁷⁶ When exploring chestnut production in Italy,

Paolo Squatriti noted that records of the practice show “the inappropriateness of applying to it rigid classical agronomical and legal categories like ‘ager,’ ‘saltus,’ and ‘silva,’ or even the more modern historiographical distinction between ‘incolto’ and ‘coltivato.’”⁷⁷

For a few of the forest words, flexibility of use dates to the classical period. *Silva* was a classical term that carried over to the Middle Ages, and could be applied broadly to many types of natural and managed woodlands. It was the “most generally-used word for woods,”⁷⁸ and therefore more specialized vocabulary also developed during the classical and medieval periods that incorporated and adapted the word *silva*. These more exact woodland terms included: *silva caedua*, coppice woods; *silva glandifera*, oak-acorn forest; and *silva pascua*, woodland pasture. During the classical period, *silva* also had mixed cultural meanings. Sometimes it represented chaos, or disordered matter, and at other times it was associated with pastoralism, highlighting one of the chief features of woodland and forest vocabulary: a literary, legal, and cultural flexibility of meaning, use, and application.⁷⁹

Despite its flexibility, *silva* was indisputably associated with features of the natural world. This is not the case with *saltus*, a classical term associated with both geographical and legal ideas. Heinrich Rubner defined the Roman *saltus* as land that (though often wooded) was characterized by its legal status as a “res nullius” or no-man’s land on which civilians could hunt freely.⁸⁰ Josef Semmler echoed Rubner’s claim for a jurisdictional definition of *saltus*: “The late antique *saltus* excluded no one: everyone was allowed to hunt large and small game, and to catch birds and fish.”⁸¹ And Chris Wickham defined *saltus* as a land that “could be hunted over by anyone.”⁸² Such definitions evoke Georges Duby’s optimistic statement that “the forest in the early Middle Ages had been a bottomless reservoir open to all, in which every man could plunge according to his needs.”⁸³

Yet *saltus* was also associated with woods, and with the word *silva*. By the early Middle Ages, Isidore of Seville (whose works were found in Stavelot’s library) defined *saltus* as “vast, wooded (*silvestria*) areas, where trees leap up to the heights.”⁸⁴ Despite Isidore’s eloquent topographic definition, *saltus* has continued to be studied primarily as it relates to legal rights and limits during the classical and Late Antique periods, and how those might have been transferred over to the Middle Ages.

Fluidity of vocabulary can be seen when the many different descriptions of the Ardennes are compared. The Ardennes were not consistently defined or labeled in Stavelot’s charters (a body of sources where some precision of terms might be expected). This is not due simply to changing chancery practice: Sigibert’s chancery issued three charters to the monasteries, and in these the Ardennes are labeled as *forestis*, *saltus*, and *silva*.⁸⁵ Richard Keyser has pointed out a similar “triple synonymy” for the Orthe, which appears “as alternatively the *silva*, *nemus*, or *foresta* of Orthe.”⁸⁶ The earliest of Sigibert’s Ardennes charters, from 644, makes a direct claim to royal ownership

through the phrase “*terra nostra silva Ardenense*.”⁸⁷ In 648 the Ardennes are both a “*foreste nostra nuncupate Arduinna*,” and a *saltus*. Finally, a charter from 652/3 labels the Ardennes as neither *silva* nor *forestis*, instead using the phrase the “great solitude of the Ardennes” (*vasta heremi Ardenensis*).⁸⁸ In the twenty subsequent references to the Ardennes that are found in Stavelot-Malmedy’s pre-1158 charters, they are labeled as a *silva*, a *saltus*, a *fundus*, a *pagus*, a *comitatus*, and a *fiscus*. In the broader record, René Noël noted that before the year 1000, the Ardennes was described as a “forêt” (he does not distinguish between *silva* and *forestis*—perhaps like some medieval authors) either twenty-one or twenty-two times, and as a *saltus* five times.⁸⁹

Most famous of these is Sigibert’s 648 charter, which famously notes that Stavelot-Malmedy was established *in foreste nostra nuncupante Arduinna*, or “in our forest that is called the Ardennes.” The charter also describes the Ardennes as a deserted place “in which a host of wild animals sprouts forth,” which has been connected to the royal interest in hunting.⁹⁰ But wild animals were not only of royal interest—they were just as much a part of the monastic imagining of the forest. This reminder of multiple authorship of charter evidence further warns against an attempt to view charter vocabulary only as applied, state-sponsored language. Language not only could shift over time and in different contexts, but could also be used and appropriated by different groups, sometimes in spite of the intentions of the original author or speaker.

The most problematic of medieval forest and woodland terms is *forestis*.⁹¹ The importance that has been placed on attempting to define *forestis* is based in part on the fact that the term appears to have been created during the early Middle Ages. Because it occurs generally (but not exclusively) in legal sources, it is often interpreted as a medieval legal invention. The earliest provable use of the term is from Sigibert’s 648 charter. Sönke Lorenz recently argued for a rehabilitation of two earlier charters (once suspected to be forgeries) that could contain earlier uses of the word *forestis*.⁹² The related word *forestarius* also made its first recorded appearance in a charter issued to Stavelot. In 670, Childeric II gave a part of the royal *forestis* to the monks, and the *forestarii* were forbidden to violate monastic rights within that zone.⁹³

Forestis circulated quickly through the Merovingian chanceries, and during the first centuries of its use, the word appears mainly, though not exclusively, in royal charters and diplomas. As Lorenz points out, at least one Merovingian *vita* contains the word *forestis*.⁹⁴ Yet in some ways this is still a “charter” usage, since the *vita* records a donation to the monastery by Dagobert’s widow. The author likely had access to a royal charter, the language of which he adopted in his own work (just as the Carolingian author of the *vita prima* transferred the word *forestis* from Sigibert’s charter into his work). Such transmissions of language and vocabulary between source genres highlights the fact that even though specific words might have

had a clear meaning to one group or in a certain context, their use and appropriation by others during the Middle Ages could blur legal or technical meanings.

General consensus among modern scholars is that *forestis* “is not a natural fact” and is instead a term of ownership (particularly royal) connected to hunting and game rights.⁹⁵ F. Vera adds that “there is some agreement that the concept of ‘forestis’ applies to the wilderness in general and to trees, forest, shrubs, wild animals, water and fish in particular,” and that all of this belonged to the king.⁹⁶ Heinrich Fichtenau concluded that this was “an institution, stretched not only over woodlands, but also over wasteland and rivers, whose hunting zones and fisheries were opened up only to the lord for pasturage, etc.”⁹⁷ This emphasis on hunting rights has also led to an attempt to disassociate the *forestis* from the trees; Richard Hayman even wrote that the term “defined a place of deer rather than a place of trees.”⁹⁸ Chris Wickham offered a definition of *forestis* that best expresses this consensus: “‘forest’ is not a woodland, or not necessarily.” “The history of the term,” he wrote, linking forest with royal rather than monastic identity, “is, in fact, nothing other than the history of the development of exclusive hunting reserves for kings and, later, nobles.”⁹⁹

This prevailing assumption that although a *forestis* might have had trees they were in no way a defining feature has been challenged, however, often on the basis of the Stavelot evidence. In the 1950s, Rudolf Schützeichel argued that the foundation charter of Stavelot-Malmedy, with its emphasis on the natural characteristics of the Ardennes, proves that during its earliest phases, *forestis* was a synonym for *silva*.¹⁰⁰ Lorenz drew on the Stavelot evidence to argue that in its earliest Merovingian and Carolingian uses, *forestis* developed to describe wooded properties. There was a “territorial character to *forestis* as an area clearly defined and in all cases covered with woods and waters.”¹⁰¹ Most recently, Keyser claims that in France after the ninth century, *forestis* “gradually became almost synonymous with *silva*, designating wooded land, albeit a treed space under lordly control.”¹⁰² Despite such compelling arguments for the inclusion of woodland features into at least the earliest phases of the history of the word, *forestis* is still traditionally defined not as a geographic term, but as a word denoting ownership and privilege.

Forestis has been chiefly defined as “an area under the king’s law”¹⁰³ and as tied to concepts of “legal delimitation, the prohibition, the reserved usage.”¹⁰⁴ This has a deep history: in his 1909 study of Merovingian and Carolingian charters, Hans Thimme concluded that *forestis* was a purely legal definition that had little, if anything, to do with woods, woodland activities, or even hunting.¹⁰⁵ In a 1964 article, Heinrich Rubner concluded that Roman law saw the *saltus* as an unclaimed or unowned property (a waste land or a “*res nullius*”), but that *forestis* reflected a sense of exclusive control over hunting rights.¹⁰⁶ In 1989, Wickham wrote that on the

Continent in the 600s through 800s, *forestis* was always associated with royal possession and legal restriction.¹⁰⁷ In such definitions, the creation of *forestes* becomes an official, regularized, and imposed state process.

Although we must be wary of applying later meanings of *forestis* to the earlier uses of the term, it appears that the Carolingian kings made a distinct effort to use the term in a regularized manner. The Merovingian *forestis* may not have been exclusively tied to royal power, but by the end of the ninth century the Carolingian kings had largely succeeded in transforming the word into a technical and legal word. As Schützeichel explained, “the legal sense of *forestis* was already well-developed, and the term was being broadly used as a *terminus technicus* in charters.”¹⁰⁸

This evolution of usage can be compared with the history of another well-known medieval term, *mansus*. Recent work has suggested that *mansus* and *forestis* might both have been part of attempts by the Carolingian government to regularize a formerly varied or mutable term, and to apply it uniformly to a diverse set of geographic and agricultural zones. Christopher Sonnlechner argued that *mansus* could be used in many contexts to present a “homogenized” view of land-holding.¹⁰⁹ This process bears striking similarities to those explored by James C. Scott, who points out that modern states “took exceptionally complex, illegible, and local social practices, such as land tenure customs or naming customs, and created a standard grid whereby it could be centrally recorded and monitored.”¹¹⁰

Carolingian uses of both *mansus* and *forestis* seem to show an administrative attempt to control and regularize record-keeping and legal terminology. Yet although the role of official, bureaucratizing forces during the early Middle Ages is clear, giving too much prominence to the Carolingian “State” also runs the risk of exaggerating the centralizing ability of early medieval monarchs, and deemphasizing the roles of other participants. Matthew Innes described this in a way that invokes Carolingian uses of the forest: “When scholars have gone hunting Carolingian government, they have had a clear idea of the kind of beast they were tracking: a hazy silhouette, glimpsed from afar, but recognizably of the same species as the modern state.... Tracking a beast resembling the modern state, they have returned empty handed, unable even to point to a strong scent or a footprint.”¹¹¹

This is particularly important in the context of Stavelot’s early Merovingian charters (which are those containing the term *forestis*), whose most recent editor has argued were perhaps not even the product of the Merovingian chancery to whom they were attributed, but instead either produced by Grimoald or a monastic writer.¹¹² Though I would not go as far as Innes in dismissing comparisons between early medieval and modern governments, it is important to remember that the medieval state was never the sole controller of written records. Other actors also influenced words and meaning, through direct intervention, later interpolation, or even outright

forgery.¹¹³ This led to a cacophony of competing written voices and to complex and widely scattered networks of chanceries and scriptoria. The vagaries (and deliberate manipulations) of charter preservation are also important to pay attention to, especially since the survival of early medieval charters that include the term is scattered and random. Furthermore, the earliest uses of the term *forestis* survive only in copies. *Forestarii* appears in an original charter from 707, but the earliest surviving original charter to use the term *forestis* is from 717.¹¹⁴ Therefore all attempts to define what the term meant during the first several centuries of its use must acknowledge the holes in the manuscript record, later substitution by Carolingian copyists, and even forgery.

A literal example of this is a ninth-century charter issued by Zwentibold, who created a *forestis* from woodlands previously belonging to the abbey of St. Maximin in Trier. The manuscript, which has been the object of much linguistic debate, has a *lacuna* where a word was never filled in: “ut quandam silvam in pago Treverensi in bannum mitteremus et ex ea, sicut Franci dicunt, _____ faceremus.”¹¹⁵ If this spot should contain the term *forestis*, it allows for the intriguing possibility that the word may not have been a legal term per se but instead an “ethnic” term like “gualdus/waldus” that resulted from the blending of Latin and Germanic tongues.¹¹⁶ Another manuscript from the 800s also points in this direction. Louis the Pious issued a charter to a royal forester named Ado, who served in the Vosges. This charter was copied into a handbook in the classical shorthand of Tironian notes, but there were a few words for which the scribe had no notational abbreviations, including *forestarius* and *forestem*, which he wrote out in full.¹¹⁷

Many historians invoke the first appearance of *forestis* in Stavelot-Malmedy’s foundation charter and make bold claims from this about the nature of the word. Yet almost none have discussed the other forest words that are found in that same charter, or set the 648 charter in the context of other charters issued by Sigibert to Remacle. It is also important that although modern scholars are fascinated with the term, *forestis* was used very rarely in Stavelot-Malmedy’s sources. Of the sixty-eight reported forests or woodlands (excluding the Ardennes) from Stavelot-Malmedy’s pre-1158 charters, only seven are labeled as *forestes*. Except for in the *vita prima*, which used the foundation charter as a template, the monks of Stavelot themselves never used the word *forestis*, and it disappears from Stavelot-Malmedy’s charters after around 950.¹¹⁸ One place name includes the word *nemus*, and five charters contain no name for the property but describe woodland uses or produce. The remaining instances all use variations on the term *silva*, many of which provide contextual details that make distinctions about woodland use and properties. This parallels results from the Belgian CETEDOC project. In their set of 183 sources written before the year 1000, the word *silva* appears fifty-seven separate times (with

another ten occurrences of the related *silvestris*) and *saltus* twenty-seven times, whereas *forestis* is found only eight times and *foresta* only once.¹¹⁹ Given its relative scarcity, it is possible that too much attention has been given to *forestis* at the expense of a more complete discussion of other woodland terms.

Furthermore, the 648 charter itself is not consistent when using forest words. Although Sigibert's first use of *forestis* supports the association with royal ownership, it is just prologue. One important contextual point not raised in discussions that focus on legality is that when Sigibert's scribes reached the legally binding portion of the charter—the actual donation of property—the word *forestis* was dropped. Sigibert gave the monks twelve *milia* of land from the neighboring *saltus*. Yet in the very next sentence, the donated portion of the *saltus* is referred to as *ipsam forestem*.¹²⁰ Throughout the charter, *forestis* and *saltus* are used quite literally interchangeably. Sönke Lorenz, who is the only scholar to have used both the entire charter and other Stavelot charters when analyzing *forestis*, argued that this inconsistency (along with the description of the Ardennes) is proof that the term *forestis*, at its inception, was equivalent with *silva* and designated a woodland.¹²¹

The very few uses of the term *forestis* inhibit a meaningful survey of changing context or meaning. Nevertheless, some general trends are worth noting. It appears that the uses of the term *forestis* in Stavelot's charters were all connected to contexts that included a focus on ownership or control of properties or with attempts to limit, bound, or label property or boundaries. Properties that included or were labeled as *forestes* continued to appear among the monasteries' holdings after the initial foundational grants. In addition to the larger Ardennes, the monasteries' holdings included parts of at least five other properties that were labeled as *forestes*. A *forestis* above the Amblève was part of a designation of the monasteries' boundaries.¹²² Three *forestes* (Wulfsbusch, Fantias, and an unnamed *forestis*) appear as portions of a boundary clause from a royal charter.¹²³

The overwhelming majority of uses of *forestis* from Stavelot and Malmedy's documents come from royal charters, thus supporting the association with the royal court.¹²⁴ Yet royal rights to woodlands apparently existed without the label of *forestis*. This includes the common royal use of the phrase *silva nostra*, which claims direct royal control and ownership without using the term *forestis*, or legal concepts such as the "royal ban." The properties granted to Cugnon included one unnamed *silva dominica* and the forest of Orgeo, described by Sigibert as *silva nostra*.¹²⁵

The charters of Stavelot-Malmedy also support Rubner's argument that *forestis* and *saltus* may have been equivalent. The 648 foundational charter uses the two words interchangeably. Thirty years later, another royal charter (HR 10) also used both terms. *Saltus* again appeared alongside *forestis* in a 1089 royal charter. This confirmation of earlier acts may reflect the

ambiguity of the 648 charter, as it too records that the monasteries of Stavelot and Malmedy had been built “within our *forestis* in the *saltus* of the Ardennes.”¹²⁶ This close association of *forestis* to *saltus* helps to draw links more directly to the words’ geographical or topographical associations, and their connection (at least in early centuries) to *silva*, since Isidore of Seville clearly associated *saltus* with trees.¹²⁷

Largely due to monastic ideas about the desert, but also because of the attempt to disassociate *forestis* from any strict geographical meaning, many authors point out that *forestis* could include not only woodlands, but also other “wastelands” such as swamps and moorlands. Roman sources set *saltus* as a direct opposite to *ager*, a juxtaposition that Fichtenau argues resembles the medieval *incultum/cultum* binary. This is an intriguing set of contrasts, particularly when set in the context of discussions of whether wilderness and waste are equivalent, and if monastic views of wilderness and civilization were similarly binary or were instead, as I argue, overlapping.

Descriptions of the Pastoral Landscape

Descriptions of the Ardennes as a place of desert hermitage show that the monks placed importance on the idea of isolation. They found solitude in the topography; trees and mountains defended, protected, and isolated the monks. However, solitude was not the only thing that the monks sought from their new desert wilderness. The monks of Stavelot-Malmedy controlled and managed woodland resources, and found many ways to measure, value, and assess them as sources of material wealth and social capital. They restored and maintained infrastructure, managed taxes and tithes, and controlled and redistributed labor and resources. Though these activities were seemingly at odds with their goals of spiritual isolation, the monks incorporated them into their religious identity through stories about the power of the saints to protect monastic landed interests. To bolster their social and religious power, they tempered the desert ideal with descriptions of a controlled and bountiful natural world, a source of abundance, fertility, and peace—an idealized pastoral landscape.

In the opening passages of the *Vita Remacli*, Heriger described Gaul as “rich in streams and rivers full of fish, the most fertile soil, the richest pasture for cattle, rich in nectared vines, numerous glades (*nemora*), abounding in a great plenty of fruits, gold and silver and other metals.”¹²⁸ This description is part of a long literary tradition based on the glorification of places (*encomium*), perhaps best known to medievalists from Bede’s description of England in the *Ecclesiastical History* (available by the eleventh century at Stavelot’s library). After establishing the political geography of Britain, Bede writes that “the island is rich in crops and in trees, and has good pasturage for cattle and beasts of burden. It also produces vines in

certain districts and has plenty of both land- and waterfowl of various kinds. It is remarkable too for its rivers, which abound in fish.”¹²⁹ Such images of abundance borrow from classical descriptions of the pastoral, and appear in Late Antique descriptions of the famous rivers of Germany and Belgium.

Ausonius, a Gallo-Roman rhetorician and poet, penned what is perhaps his most famous work, a 483-line poem in praise of the Mosel River, around A.D. 371.¹³⁰ The poem describes a journey down the Mosel, acknowledging the beauty of the landscape and the river, the presence of humans and their industries, and the river’s abundance and fertility. “Hail river,” he wrote:

blessed by the fields, blessed by the husbandmen, to whom the
Belgae owe the imperial honour which graces their city (Trier):
river, whose hills are o’ergrown with Bacchus’ fragrant vines,
o’ergrown, river most verdant, thy banks with turf ... thou hast all
that belongs to springs, brooks, rivers, lakes, and tidal Ocean with
his ebb and flow.... Do thou for me, O Nymph, dweller in the river’s
realm, declare the hosts of the scaly herd, and from the depths of
thy watery bed discourse of those throngs which glide in the azure
stream.¹³¹

Ausonius addresses and praises the charms of all of the different fish in the river, while also describing fishing (from the perspectives of both the fisher and the fish), milling, and other human uses of natural resources. Though the Belgian people figure prominently in the poem, in the closing passages he reminds the reader of his broader intent: “and, putting off the praise of famous men, let me tell of the happy river in its joyous course through the green country-side, and hallow it in the waters of the Rhine.”¹³²

In the sixth century, the Latin poet and bishop Venantius Fortunatus continued this literary tradition, composing a series of poems that described the natural and human-made beauty of the Mosel River valley. Fortunatus, a native of the Vosges, wrote with a rich blend of classical literary tradition and Christian spirituality. His Mosel poems, written after 566 when he returned to live in Gaul, blend panegyric and encomium and demonstrate how German and Belgian landscapes were idealized and imagined at the dawn of the Middle Ages.¹³³

Fortunatus’s Mosel poems draw heavily on his classical training, and as Michael Roberts has pointed out, they are deeply indebted to the style and symbolism of Ausonius’s poems, drawing on a similar set of “features of the Gallo-Roman landowning ideal.”¹³⁴ Yet whereas Ausonius compares the Mosel extensively to sites in classical Greco-Roman world, and addresses many of the classical nymphs, deities, and spirits of the waters, Fortunatus frequently compares the river to his own home and connects his praise of nature to the Christian religion. Building on even earlier pastoral poetry and literature, these two poets bridged Late Antiquity, and helped to ensure that

the elements of the classical pastoral survived to become incorporated into Christian writing. Indeed, Fortunatus is in every way a bridge between those genres, because in addition to writing classical poetry about the new Frankish leaders and territories, he was also the author of several *vitae* and miracle collections.¹³⁵

Two of his Mosel poems were written as panegyrics for local bishops. In a poem praising bishop Nicetius of Trier's construction of a Mosel fortress, Fortunatus describes the waters that "desire to bring forth bounties. As much as the waters swell, the neighboring area yields up fish; from here banquets are produced." Yet this fertility is also produced through the intervention of people, and "the native, rejoicing, recognizes the fruitful furrows, bearing prayers of fertility to the ripening field. The farmers nourish their eyes from the future harvest."¹³⁶ This poem neatly reconciles the bishop's material and spiritual efforts and binds early medieval religious culture with the classical literary tradition.

In a poem addressed to the bishop of Metz, Fortunatus begins with praise of the Mosel's "dark stream," which "softly rolls along its great waters; it laps the banks, scented with the verdant sward, and the wave gently washes the grassy blades." As with Ausonius's poem, Fortunatus incorporates human industry seamlessly into his view of the natural beauty of the river. This pastoral, lush landscape is augmented by the human presence. Metz, a "gleaming" city, displays both natural abundance and the beauty of human industry and agriculture. Metz "rejoices, both sides besieged by fish. The delightful domain is bright with flourishing fields; here you see tended crops, and there you behold roses. You look forth on hills clothed in shady vines, fertile growth of all kinds strives for place."¹³⁷

For Fortunatus, wine and vineyards, rich with both classical and Christian meaning, are one of the key markers of Gaul's natural abundance. In a short epigram to Bishop Vilicus, he mentions Falernian wine as a symbol of class and taste. Yet though this classical culture lingers, the Christian metaphors abound. Where Ausonius invoked Bacchus, Fortunatus relies on the Christian God. In a poem to the bishop of Galicia, he wrote that "The vine dresser orders the rows in apostolic manner.... He cuts the fruitless wild vines out of the Lord's field, and there are clusters of grapes where once were shrubs... and the fruitful harvest springs up evenly."¹³⁸ Fortunatus's Mosel is drawn into a Christian pastoral landscape, and aspects of the natural world that could also serve as markers of the desert wilderness are here transformed into signs of fertility. In poem 10.9, he writes, "not even here are the unyielding stones free to be without fruit; indeed the rocks are fruitful and flow with wine ... the vines are clustered thickly in rows planted on the crags... the patches cultivated by the farmers shine amidst the savage rocks."¹³⁹

Throughout his poems, Fortunatus praises human industry and the deliberate harvest and use of resources. At Andernach, "there are vineyards

here in broad stretches on the hills, another area is of level tilled land; but the abundance of that beautiful place is all the greater because there is a second harvest for the people in the waters.”¹⁴⁰ Fish, in Fortunatus’s poems, are not Ausonius’s personified resources. Instead, alongside wine, they are symbolic markers of both natural and Christian fertility. From the Mosel, “the fish leaps up from the wave,” and the nets of fishers are spread so thickly that they could ensnare boats.¹⁴¹ In the epigram to Bishop Vilicus, Fortunatus made the Christian connection explicit, writing, “your nets, father, are overflowing with heavy fish; it seems that you have merited the part of Peter.”¹⁴²

Fortunatus also wrote about the Ardennes and the Vosges, drawing the forests into both the world of lyric landscape poetry and that of the Gallo-Roman leisure class. He imagined an idyllic region, where his friend, Gogo, could experience what we would today call an outdoor lifestyle:

What occupies his carefree mind in tranquil times? if he lingers by
the banks of the wave-driven Rhine to catch with his net in its
waters the fat salmon, or roams by the grape-laden Moselle’s
stream¹⁴³

The poem continues, invoking the “gentle breeze,” and the soothing shade provided by the riverside vineyards. It also links up the region’s other tributary streams, and moving Gogo (and the reader) deeper into the lands that within a generation would be swept up in the monastic world that had been so influenced by Fortunatus’s hero-bishops and the saints and monks whose biographies he wrote:

Or else does he wander the sunny groves and glens and with his net
snare wild animals, with his spear kill them? Does the forest crack
and thunder in the Ardennes or Vosges with the death of stag, goat,
elk, or aurochs, shot by his arrows? ... Or does he cultivate his
property, furrowing the dried-out tilth, as the bull groans at the
plow’s weight on his untrained neck?¹⁴⁴

In Fortunatus’s Ardennes, also full of wild animals, there is no sense of fear, and no sense of a struggle for survival (either physical or metaphysical). Instead, this is a landscape for leisure and livelihood, and Gogo, an early medieval man, can enjoy the pleasures of the Roman upper classes. The Ardennes teem with a wide and abundant set of game animals, and Fortunatus exults in the abundance of God’s Creation.

The parallels to the Roman pastoral are clear, especially in the final evocation of the power of the plow. Gogo tames the bull, and through his cultivation turns the “sunny groves and glens” of the Ardennes into a

productive landscape. This “wilderness” is not at all removed from the agricultural landscape. This is, as Cronon would have us see, a domesticated landscape but one that is not separate from the wild.

Fortunatus’s Late Antique images of the Ardennes seem to come from a different world than the harsh and isolated forests that accompanied stories of monastic foundations. Yet the monks, too, could view the Ardennes as safe, productive, and beautiful. They wrote passages that reflect these vibrant and verdant landscapes, taking up the mantle of classical and Late Antique pastoral writing. The tenth-century *vita Berregisi*, for example, details how the saint established Andage/Saint-Hubert in a wooded spot (*saltus*) that was divinely revealed to him. It was a beautiful place: the woods (*nemora*) were dense and leafy, and it was also (as fits the image of the Ardennes as a desert) “far removed from the city.” The lush forest, with its fruit-bearing trees, was a place of beauty and abundance: “There, the place made fertile by very clear and healthful waters, bearing verdant meadows with rich soil, surrounded by the loveliness of woods (*nemora*), it offers great benefit for those seeking the solitary life.”¹⁴⁵

The *vita Berregisi* describes the fertile waters and grasses of the Ardennes; the *Translatio Quirini* describes the animal resources. The area around the Amblève River was fertile and abounding in wild game: “The hunter, becoming lost, was accustomed to carry a spear through the places where many wild animals were known to arise, attending to the more abundant pastures, and to throw out fishing or birding nets, to catch up all the flying and swimming creatures that thrived there in abundance.”¹⁴⁶ Though found in an eleventh-century work, this could be Gogo’s Ardennes. Yet these pastoral references are incorporated seamlessly into hagiographical works—connecting monasticism and monastic uses of nature not to images of stark wildness, but to ideas of boundless nature, utility, and fertility.

Chapter 2

showed how the monks of Stavelot-Malmedy constructed ideas of the Ardennes as wild. This chapter focuses on the ways that the monks interacted with that same landscape in ways that encouraged them to see it as domesticated.

The most striking feature of the Ardennes, then and now, is the extensive forest cover, which has been altered by human inhabitation for millennia. By the early medieval period, this forest would in some ways have contributed to a monastic sense of isolation, of marginalization from the champion landscape further to the south (even by the 600s clearly more fully settled and agriculturally developed), and even of living in an uncontrollable and inhospitable landscape. Yet the monasteries of the Ardennes were successful not in spite of their mountains, swift streams, and dense forests, but because of them. The forests themselves were of fundamental agricultural and economic importance; Stavelot-Malmedy's leaders invested deeply in the agricultural infrastructure of the Ardennes, and their activities helped to shape a domesticated, pastoral landscape that was at times teeming with abundance, managed, and molded to shape human needs.

Though the monks of Stavelot-Malmedy would later claim otherwise, people had settled along the major river valleys in and near the Ardennes as early as 1000 b.c., when Neolithic people and animals first began to alter the dense forests of the Ardennes. Prehistoric clearance of forested land for fields and animal grazing established a base pattern of agricultural settlement in the region that would only intensify as the years passed.⁴ Human exploitation of the natural forest and woodland resources continued with the Roman incursions and early medieval settlement. Yet even with such anthropogenic effects, the Ardennes remained heavily forested.

This is in part due to the sheer scale of those forests and in part to the fact that despite the focus in some scholarship on deforestation, medieval forests were not haphazardly drained of resources. Beginning around the 1960s, scholars created a picture of the ancient world as severely deforested and desiccated through human agency.⁵ One archaeologist argued that the initial Celtic clearance of part of the Ardennes was "the fundamental basis for first the degradation and finally the disappearance of the forests."⁶ When connected with the broader discussion of the deforestation of France and Belgium (the "Great Clearances") over the course of the central Middle Ages, such views paint medieval people as carelessly and rampantly clearing forests in favor of arable land, fuel for industry, and profit-driven agriculture. Based on an example from the monastery of Saint-Denis from the 1100s, Marc Bloch remarked that by the Central Middle Ages "as a result of this relatively intensive and quite unregulated exploitation the ranks of the trees became progressively thinner ... [and] there were already places where the woodland was sparse."⁷ This extensive use of woodland, he claimed, combined with clearance for agricultural purposes and general economic and demographic decline led to a post-Carolingian countryside

that had “an undeniably depopulated aspect, riddled with pockets of emptiness.”⁸ Using the same example, Georges Duby mirrored Bloch’s assessment of early medieval forest use, noting that the “open forests of the early Middle Ages [were] badly maintained and damaged by unplanned utilization.”⁹

However, an alternate approach has developed, spearheaded by the work of Oliver Rackham, a professional forester who advocates an understanding of the ancient and medieval forest as sustainably managed and developed rather than thoughtlessly destroyed. This approach emphasizes the continuity of forest use, concluding that medieval forest use was extensive and deliberate, but also much more stable, and focused on preserving standing trees and the protection of wooded zones.¹⁰ A vast array of animal, vegetable, and mineral resources were actively exploited by medieval people who recognized the enormous value of the forests as productive zones.

The evidence from Stavelot-Malmedy continues to reinforce the argument that forests were highly managed and well integrated into other aspects of the agricultural economy. Unsurprisingly the administrative documents from monasteries in the Ardennes include many references to forests and woodland resources. Some of these forests were used primarily for rearing pigs; others were managed for firewood. Some were densely vegetated; others would have been more sparsely treed, best suited for wood pasture. The monks of Stavelot controlled some of these woodlands in their entirety, some only partially, and several others appear to have been under the monks’ jurisdiction but not direct management. The diverse forest ecosystems provided sustainable, exploitable resources for a wide spectrum of medieval agricultural and economic pursuits, and the monks reconciled this to their views of forests as religious spaces.

Economic and Agricultural Uses of the Domesticated Landscape

By the ninth century, Stavelot-Malmedy, Saint-Hubert, and Prüm were all actively exploiting properties in the Ardennes. Using records from all three deepens our understanding of how the monks interacted with forests. As expected, these show a bounty of forested lands; seventy of Stavelot’s properties explicitly had forests, and it is likely, given both their location and medieval agricultural patterns, that almost all of their properties had access to some sort of woodland or forest.¹¹ This impression is upheld by the fact that in theory all of Prüm’s estates owed the monastery at least a few woodland products, and over half owed substantial amounts of more than one woodland product.

Facing such a wealth of woodlands, landowners in the Ardennes had

many different ways of managing and exploiting trees and timber resources. Unfortunately, Stavelot and Saint-Hubert both have sparse and uneven administrative records that are impressionistic at best, and not able to be used to see changes in forest cover or forest use over time. However, Prüm provides a rich set of data on the types and quantities of woodland dues that monasteries in the Ardennes could have expected to collect. Prüm's surviving records include a detailed polyptych (known as the Urbar of Prüm). It was originally composed in 893 and recopied and commented on by the abbot Caesarius in 1222.¹² It contains 118 separate entries, many of which report multiple properties. It also reports the taxes (in money and in kind) owed to the monastery and the labor duties of the dependent landholders and their servants. Finally, although he added commentary, Caesarius made few changes to the contents, in itself an argument for some degree of long-term continuity of both forest cover and forest management.

The large timber trees and the dense forest cover of the Ardennes were part of what allowed the monks to imagine dark, dangerous, and overwhelming forests, but they also helped the monks create economic success and manage their agricultural landscape. Timber was used for houses, sheds, barns, mills, churches, and many other buildings throughout the monasteries' estates. Since the houses controlled hundreds of properties throughout the Ardennes, their timber demands would have been extensive. Prüm's estates owed tithes of boards used for roofing, fencing, and building projects. Collectively, the estates owed at least 116 cartloads of boards and 20,850 individual boards annually. The majority of the properties also owed roofing shingles (around 40,000 were delivered to monastic officials annually), another indication of the scale of monastic building projects.

Around 1185, Countess Agnes of Chiny and Lambert of Étalle both gave portions of the *silva* of Bellumcampania to one of Saint-Hubert's priories so that the monks could extract as much timber (*ligna*) as they needed to maintain the buildings.¹³ In the twelfth century, the administrator of Stavelot's villa of Calchus was allowed to harvest timber from the forest to rebuild a cow barn.¹⁴ The villa of Stavelot could also be called on to supply "wood for building." If the monastery were undertaking a large-scale building project, such as the renovation of the church that took place in 1040, it is conceivable that the villa could be asked to provide up to eighteen cartloads of timber to the monastery in a single summer.¹⁵

A more specific example of how tithes of timber products could be used to support monastic building comes from Caesarius's comments in the Urbar. He notes that: "When he wishes to do so, the abbot can set up a lime kiln every year, for the purposes of building a church. All of the properties on this side of the Kyll river must help him with that. The properties of Densborn and Hermespannd will deliver the rods and posts for the thatching of the kiln's covering. All other estates from the Ösling must bring massive tree trunks. Each mansus will deliver four trunks, each of which should be

16 feet long and 2½ feet wide. The other estates, however, such as Rommersheim, Sarresdorf, and Wallersheim, each bring 16 cartloads of limestone.”¹⁶ This passage shows the monks directly managing how and when timber trees were felled, and using resources directly for spiritual purposes.

While the scale of such building projects was dramatic and involved use of the largest trees, fuel was a much more common use of tree resources. Every single one of Prüm’s estates owed at least one cord (*glavem*) of firewood annually. Caesarius specified that the cord should measure 12 feet long and 6 feet wide, and that every *mansus* had to bring this to the monastery in 12 deliveries (perhaps once a month).¹⁷ The single manse that the monks controlled at Fliessen owed a cord of wood annually, but the monastery collected 30 cords of wood every year from their estates at Rommersheim.¹⁸ Caesarius explains that “the monastery’s *camerarius* would receive the wood, and use it to make a sufficient fire in a heated room. This happens throughout the entire winter, beginning on the feast of All Saints and extending through the Easter holidays. The fire should be lit at the beginning of Matins, and burns through the end of Compline.”¹⁹ Again, the administrative record explicitly connects the economic resources to the monks’ spiritual purposes.

Prüm’s estates also provided a secondary form of fuel wood in the form of *daurestuve* (alternately *facula*—the Urbar uses both terms). These were bundles of tree bark burned to provide lighting inside estate buildings, including inside the barns “where the dependents thresh the wheat in December, when the days are short.” Caesarius explained that “every mansus provides 5 bundles and each bundle contains the bark of 15 trees.” It is unclear if this bark came from trees that could regenerate bark (such as birches) or if the bark was stripped from felled timber trees.²⁰ Though each mansus was required to provide 5 bundles (75 trees), many of the monastic properties provided far more: the single manse at Ginsdorf provided 50 bundles of bark and Monzelfeld’s six manses provided 300 bundles.²¹

The monks of Stavelot had direct rights to harvest firewood (*materiaminima*) from the *silva* of Astanetum. Additionally, the villa of Stavelot owed the monastery a regular tithe that could be met by the delivery of two carts of firewood, or “wood for burning,” three times a year.²² Larger fuel needs could also be met by the production of charcoal, which was intimately tied to forests and woodland management. It is possible that Stavelot’s “wood for burning” was intended not for the monastic stoves, but for being turned into charcoal to be distributed through other estates.²³

If Prüm can serve as a comparison, then these two records reveal only a small part of the fuel dues collected by Stavelot-Malmedy. The amount of fuel wood that Prüm received annually is staggering. The monastery collected at least 890 cords and 2,274 carts of firewood. It also received at least 6,816 bundles of bark (plus 34 and a half cartloads containing an

unspecified number of bark bundles). At 15 trees apiece, the bark bundles alone represent some 100,000 trees, either harvested live or felled. These taxes represent only a small portion of the wood harvested and burned by the estates—this is not the amount they used or produced, but the amount they tithed. Furthermore, there were many other landholders exercising similar rights in the region, all of whom heavily managed and harvested the forests of the Ardennes. Truly, the Ardennes produced “battalions” of trees!

Yet even in heavily wooded areas like the Ardennes, medieval farmers and estate managers recognized the importance of ensuring a steady and sustainable supply of wood for fuel. Throughout the Middle Ages, people deliberately managed and harvested standing tree crops in ways that allowed demand to be met without necessitating a significant reduction in the size of forest and woodland cover. Though other uses and goals could lead to clearances, fuel demand does not appear to have led to large-scale deforestation. Constant demand instead encouraged conservative and renewable practices, and productive woodlands were protected and maintained over centuries.

One of the most common premodern ways to manage forests for the production of firewood was to take advantage of the fact that trees have many ways of regenerating themselves, either from roots, stumps, or trunks. People can exploit this natural tendency by cropping trees to encourage more frequent regrowth. These new branches (or shoots) grow out from central tree stumps that can survive for hundreds of years. The protection and then harvesting of these shoots (called coppicing) produces a steady, renewable, and predictable source of small wood. Another method of harvesting live trees is pollarding, which harvests from approximately five to seven feet high on the tree trunk, protecting the new shoots from animals (though the products are often used as fodder). These processes, often incorporated alongside other forest management techniques, were ubiquitous in medieval Europe.²⁴ By regularly cutting off all of the trees’ branches, these processes frequently arrest and restart tree growth and development, allowing people to harvest crops at planned and regular intervals, creating, in effect, “branch-farms.”²⁵

Coppicing was one of the true hallmarks of the medieval forest. Oliver Rackham goes so far as to claim that the key difference between “wildwood” (a term he studiously uses in the place of both “wilderness” and “virgin forest”) and “woodland” or the domestic forest was “above all *management* by rotational felling to provide a succession of crops and by fencing to protect the young growth from grazing animals.”²⁶ A landscape like the Ardennes was probably coppiced with standards, a process that produces a multilayered forest; the coppice is the underwood, and scattered larger trees, called standards, are grown for timber or preserved to provide animal fodder. These older, more mature trees provide shade and shelter for animals as well as ensuring multiple tree resources from a single patch of managed

woodland.²⁷ But even the large standards found within coppiced zones are a direct product of human woodland management since they were artificially selected in favor of trees that would provide fruit, nuts, or timber.

In heavily forested regions such as the Ardennes, the woods were used not only for fuel production but also for pasturing, animal-rearing, and harvesting forest products. This may have preserved the larger forest ecosystems alongside more heavily managed areas. A combination of managed and unmanaged forest in the regions controlled by Stavelot-Malmedy would have produced woodlands whose visual appearance could vary dramatically, an effect that may have contributed much to the monks' multiple cultural views of their landscape.

Also of importance for understanding the monks' relationship to their forests is that coppicing reflects the multiple layers of monastic land management. Forest resources were essential for the exploitation of the rest of the landscape. Coppicing produced fuel for daily needs and to support industry, and the rods were used to create tools, fencing, roofing, baskets, fish weirs, and many other materials necessary for agricultural success.²⁸ Prüm's estates again provide a depth of detail about the uses of coppiced wood that is not available in Stavelot-Malmedy's record. The Urbar demonstrates the ubiquity and scale of coppicing and the variety of ways in which coppice products enhanced and supported other agricultural activities. At least twenty-one estates provided rods or staves (*palos*) to the monastery, generally ranging from 50 to 100 rods per manse. Perhaps most startling, the 2.5 manses and 57 small vineyards at the estate of Mehring owed annually 15,700 rods and an additional 11,400 rods for fencing.²⁹ The rods could be used as fence poles, for thatching fences, for supporting vines in the monastery's many vineyards, and for building fish weirs. Iversheim's manses provided "rods for the vineyard," Dienheim provided "rods for the fishery," and the residents of Albisheim had to both provide the rods and then deliver them to the fishery.³⁰

Many of the monastery's dependents owed annual labor services that included not only delivering the rods to the vineyards and fisheries, but also using them to stake grapevines and, frequently, to fence in demesne lands. Caesarius explained that the fencing units were "thirty feet long" and added that the workers "must build the fence where they are ordered."³¹ In Remich residents were obligated to provide 50 rods annually, and to build 180 feet of fencing "by the fishery" and 150 feet around the demesne.³² Fencing could either be done by thatching or wattling (using coppicing products) between fence posts (far more common) or by using some of the many boards that the properties also owed. Bastogne's residents were instructed to use fence posts and planking, using five planks for every section of fence.³³

Even though timber extraction and the harvesting of coppice woods both involved the cutting down of trees, either permanently or temporarily, medieval woodland management also made use of standing trees. There is

some evidence that monastic communities in the Ardennes had active orchards. One of Stavelot's properties sent peaches as tribute for special feast days, and Stavelot had a walled orchard, but it is mentioned in only one surviving document.³⁴ Trees also produced nuts for both human and animal diets; in particular, the oaks and beeches provided an important source of food for pigs. Many of Prüm's estates were required to collect acorns and either send them as a tithe or use them to feed pigs that they raised specifically for the monastery. These pigs would have been pastured for at least part of the year in the woods, a practice known as pannage. This practice was attractive because it could be supported by the older, full-growth trees (standards) that anchored coppice lands. Thus pig grazing could be used alongside other monastic uses of the forests, and controlled in ways that avoided damage to young coppice shoots.

Pannage was the most widespread form of silvi-pastoralism (or pasturing animals in woodlands) during the Middle Ages. It was so common that it became emblematic for fall, depicted in calendars, books of hours, and even cathedral images. The pigs themselves, as well as the land on which they were masted (fed on nuts and acorns), were financially valuable. This is visible in instances when monastic properties were described by the number of pigs that they could support. Only three such records exist from Stavelot-Malmedy, all between 891 and 917 (around the same time that the Urbar was first compiled). Sigudis had "prime woodland in which a thousand pigs could be pastured." The monastic property of Ausegias could reportedly support 500 pigs, and the villa of Beueras had a forest that could support 200 pigs.³⁵

The Urbar of Prüm includes a wider range of estimates of the sizes of pig herds (numbering between 10 and 1,000 pigs) maintained in forests and woodlands. The single property of Iversheim contained several woods: one at Bastiberg that could support 200 pigs, a communal wood in Tegenscheid that could also support 200 pigs, a small wood that supported 60 pigs, and one that could handle only 30 pigs.³⁶ Prüm's estates reportedly delivered at least 875 adult pigs every year, and the monastery also collected suckling pigs for special occasions. At least 110 were meant to be delivered every second year and 29 delivered on an annual basis. Furthermore, many (and probably most, though it is only occasionally recorded) properties had explicit obligations to take care of pig herds, such as Etteldorf, whose manseholders each "watched over the pigs in the forest for one week, when it was [their] turn."³⁷

Yet such numeric precision in medieval pig measurements is deceptive. Recording the sizes of pig herds was often a means of measuring not the actual size of the herds, but the relative size, quality, and value of the woodlands themselves. This practice is best known from its use in England's *Domesday Book*. Yet, as Oliver Rackham points out, there are many layers of doubt when dealing with such measurements (which were, in any case, not uniformly applied). "Unfortunately," he points out, "this is not the down-to-

earth method of estimating the area of a wood that it seems to be.... It is unrealistic to expect an objective equation between pigs and acres.... [men were measuring] swine of the imagination.” It is impossible, he points out, to tell if a wood recorded as only being able to support a small number of pigs was physically small, or poor in mast, or a coppice wood, or even “a wood owned by a pessimist.”³⁸

Since we are fundamentally unable to evaluate the personalities of medieval surveyors, all we can do is remember that *Domesday Book*, Prüm’s Urbar, and other documents recorded measurements that were products of the goals, intentions, and perceptions of individuals and groups, and did not necessarily reflect either the extent of forests or the size of actual pig herds. Another ninth-century polyptych, that of Lobbes (also a Benedictine house in the Ardennes), provides details that demonstrate this difference between estimated “swine of the imagination” and actual sizes of pig herds. Lobbes’s surveyor states that on one property, the woods were “according to estimates able to sustain fifty pigs.”³⁹ However, at the time of the survey there were only thirty pigs on the estate. Further examples show the difference between assessed and actual herd sizes: the property of Strono had woods estimated to support thirty pigs, but only fifteen were found. In an opposite example, at Ducia the forest measurement was listed as twenty pigs, but when it was surveyed there were thirty-three on the property.⁴⁰

Some of the imprecision is due to surveys being primarily used not to measure forests, but to assess taxes on pannaging rights. These taxes were either in the form of *pasnagium* or *glandaticum* (a payment of money for the right to pannage) or as a payment in kind of a percentage of the pigs raised. In one case, the tax became the subject of conflict between the abbot of Stavelot and the residents of Bullingen, who had ignored the customal tax on pannage when they cleared their woodland without permission.⁴¹ Another time, Wibald personally collected a *pasnagium* payment from an unnamed property that was being troublesome about the tax. And though he exempted the villa of Longia from paying the *glandaticum*, its meat vendors could still be called on to provide support for visiting abbots.⁴²

These meat vendors would deal in more than just pigs. Medieval woodlands were well suited to forest grazing of cows, sheep, and goats. The literary descriptions of the Ardennes emphasize the richness and fertility of the pastures that lined the rivers. Pastures could also be found inside the great forests of the Ardennes; throughout medieval Europe, pastures and meadows were a natural feature of woodlands. Because of coppicing and natural forest diversity, forests were full of open spaces that could be used and expanded by people to raise domestic animals. In addition to grazing in clearings, many animals, including cattle, could find food such as shrubs and leaves in the forest itself, or be fed the waste (or lop and top) from coppicing. Animal grazing in woodlands may also lay behind some of the high medieval transformations of the Hohe Venn from a high, wooded peat bog,

full of birch and alder trees, to a type of moor. This process began in the Carolingian era, but it was not until the thirteenth century that more extensive peat cutting created the extensive high, boggy heath land of today.⁴³

Charters and other administrative evidence that record the trade, donation, use, or sale of land reveal the Ardennes as not just a dense forest, but a diverse, productive landscape used by monks and residents to support agriculture and industry. One of the earliest charters from Stavelot-Malmedy summarizes the types of properties that were given to the houses by Merovingian kings and other landholders: “villas, houses, unfree servants, inhabitants, vineyards, woodlands (*silvis*), plains, meadows, pasture, still and running waters, other benefices, and moveable and immovable goods.”⁴⁴ Individual properties display the same variety of land types. Saint-Hubert controlled the priory of Saint-Michel de Cons along with all of the church’s holdings, including “the tithes, the *familia*, the cultivated and uncultivated lands, meadows, woodlands, vineyards, waters, mills, and fisheries.”⁴⁵ Prüm’s villa of Büdesheim included “houses, land, buildings, woods, fields, meadows, pastures, standing and flowing waters, mills, shepherds and their flocks, and large and small livestock of both sexes.”⁴⁶

The villa of Braz, near Stavelot, was controlled by several parties, eventually including both Stavelot and Saint-Hubert. Charters from both houses reveal it to have been a diverse property. In 1082, Henry, the bishop of Liège, gave Saint-Hubert his property there, “along with its *familia* and all of its useful features and appurtenances, namely the cultivated and uncultivated lands, pastures, woods, [and the] still and running waters with the fisheries.” He gave the monastery all of his rights, except for his hunting privilege (*absque venantione*), which he kept for his own use.⁴⁷ In 1107, Berta of Bullon similarly gave Stavelot some of her holdings in Braz to the monastery of Stavelot, including two of her slaves and the two manses they held from her in the villa, which contained pastures, waters, and woodlands.⁴⁸

These descriptions are taken from “holdings lists” or “appurtenance lists,” which vary in length, but generally consist of a series of short descriptive phrases and legal terms. These include classifications of properties that allow historians to understand property subdivisions and the features of the landscape that property owners deemed important.⁴⁹ As Daniel Smail has demonstrated in his study of Marseille, descriptive phrases from legal documents, far from boilerplate, could serve as ways of expressing mental landscapes, and it is worth examining these holdings clauses further.⁵⁰ Although they are part of legal documents rather than narrative sources, in some cases these clauses can (and should) be treated as descriptions of the landscape, or as ways to present the mental imagining of the character of specific properties.

In Stavelot-Malmedy’s case, spatial or geographic sites and zones

(forests, fields, pastures, buildings, church zones) are more prominent in these clauses than the resources that were produced in such zones (crops, cattle, pigs, and timber). These descriptions highlight the variety of natural and human features in the landscape. Stavelot's villa of Germigny (now lost) was an active and diverse property, with a substantial infrastructure and a variety of people working the land: "lands, houses, *mansi*, slaves, [and] buildings, along with vineyards, fields, pastures, woods, cultivated and uncultivated lands, still and running waters." An earlier holdings list for Germigny shows even more signs of active economic development; the holdings include all "houses, buildings, slaves, tenants, monies, fields, waters, and all structures," including two mills.⁵¹

Saint-Hubert's properties in the same general region also had fields, pasture, woodlands, waterways, mills, breweries, fisheries, and other types of productive land. The 687 foundational charter for the house reports that the monastery's immediate surroundings (deep in the Ardennes) included unspecified lands, "meadows, pastures, waters with mills, along with woods, villages, and small settlements."⁵² Such lists reveal that the medieval Ardennes were a mosaic of different landscapes and land use types, integrating cereal cultivation, forest exploitation, and livestock rearing.

Though evidence for silvipastoralism appears throughout Stavelot's charters,⁵³ a single property exchange from 891 can serve to show the pervasiveness of the practice and the variety of forms it could take. Ricarius, a man of unknown rank, gave Stavelot some property in the villas of Bure and Bourcy. This gift amounted to twelve manses that included fields, meadows, woods, and waters. The gift included Sigudis, which had "meadows and along with them a prime woodland in which a thousand pigs could be pastured."⁵⁴ As compensation for this generous gift, the monastery in turn gave Ricarius several properties that included both meadows and woodlands.⁵⁵

Occasionally, Stavelot-Malmedy's records provide us glimpses of the monasteries' livestock, such as the 40 rams (*arietis*) owed as an annual tithe by the fisc at Wellin. More common, however, is evidence of the infrastructure that supported animals, including cow barns, or *bovaria*. Calchus had a *bovarium* that became so neglected that the newly appointed administrator was instructed to rebuild it. Wibald, as abbot of Corvey, entered into a contract with a local man that resulted in instructions that the man build a *bovarium* on a property that also included a woodland. Stavelot's villa of Lierneux included a *bovarium* that supported a large herd of milk cows, and the property rendered an annual cheese tax to the monastery.⁵⁶

Another way to see the diversity and prominence of livestock in the Ardennes is incidences of animal theft. The alleged crimes of a single man, Count Henry of Salme, reflect not only local tensions but also the extent of animal husbandry on Stavelot's properties. Wibald accused Henry of

stealing an extraordinary number of animals from the villa of Paletenmet: 120 sheep, eight pigs, and three goats as well as 100 miscellaneous animals. This was not an isolated incident; Wibald accused Henry of targeting three other villas, stealing a total of fifty-two cows and sixteen other animals. At another estate he was accused of stealing twenty young bulls and attempting to blind a man and steal his wife, and he then allegedly attacked another villa, stealing six cows and the other preparations for a wedding feast.⁵⁷

Monastic forests were also full of wild animals, plants, insects, and other natural resources that could be harvested. The *Passio Agilolfi* described flowering trees and colorful herbs. The forest clearings of the Ardennes at times would have been filled with flowers and honey-producing bees.⁵⁸ In both the *vita Remaculi* and the *vita Hadalini*, Heriger used these bees as a natural symbol of Christian industry; he described the confluence of monks around holy men as bees swarming around a beehive, linking the resource to monastic identity.⁵⁹ Honey, one of the only sweeteners available to pre-Crusades Europe, was a valuable forest resource that the monks of the Ardennes harvested and collected as taxes from local and extra-regional dependents. Prüm collected honey tithes from several estates, and Caesarius explained that “this honey is brought from the beehives from the ecclesiastical forests (*silvae*); from this honey, honey-wine is produced for the sick brothers and for holy days (but the pepper needed for this spiced drink we tax from our properties in the Netherlands).”⁶⁰ Prüm’s forests also yielded blackberries to produce a blackberry wine. Woodlands were also filled with edible plants and roots, mushrooms, and medicinal plants (such as those named in Wibald’s cure for chilblains). Other forest resources supported medieval building and industry, including the ferns harvested to produce potash (important for the glassmaking industry), resins, tannins, minerals, and quarried stone.⁶¹ Residents of the village of Stavelot owed the monks annual supplies of limestone (*calx*) or coal (“*lapides ad comburendum*”) and the properties given to Remacle for his foundation of Cugnion included quarries.⁶²

Salt was another prized mineral that the monks of the Ardennes had access to. Fed by brine springs, the Seille, a tributary of the Mosel, was the site of a substantial Celtic salt industry. By the Carolingian period, salt was again being produced there by salt pans, whose fuel needs indelibly link salt production and woodland management. Prüm’s estates of Vic-sur-Seille near Metz had three salt pans, each tithing 100 *modia* of salt annually. The salt pans would have each managed a coppice lot or procured a steady source of rods, which the monastery then taxed: each salt pan was required to tithe 48 rods or a cart of salt. The competition over the salt resources appears to have been significant, since the Urbar makes an unusual provision for checking on the honesty of the men running the pans and describes a process of tracking salt prices.⁶³ Though there is no direct evidence that Stavelot controlled properties along the Seille, they did have many other fiscal

interests along the Mosel, and their salt may well have come through connections to Prüm or houses in and around Metz.

As the lyrical accounts of the Mosel and the Meuse demonstrate, the major rivers were an incredibly important physical and economic feature of the landscape of the Ardennes.⁶⁴ They were a source of transportation of goods and people, and Prüm's Urbar shows the extensiveness of river travel for delivering and distributing goods in kind. At Mehring, for example, each *mansus* was required to undertake one shipping journey, and the Urbar specified that the pilot of the ship and all of the sailors should receive bread and wine supplies, which varied according to the distance traveled.⁶⁵ Many people used the rivers in this way, and the tolls and taxes on river traffic collected at bridges and ports could be a steady source of income. The importance of the river economy might also be revealed by ways that monastic literary and legal sources "invented" monastic rights to the river tolls that extended back to the seventh century. A forged charter (perhaps from the late 900s) in the name of Sigibert III granted the monasteries the right to receive the toll revenue. This central medieval forgery directly connected economic needs with the royal pursuit of religious rewards; in addition to serving the monks' daily needs, the toll money was to be used for lights for the basilica.⁶⁶ Around the year 1000, Heriger included a discussion of this purported gift in the *vita Remacii*, further connecting this fiscal donation with religious purposes (and perhaps trying to use hagiography to reinforce the authority of the forged charter).⁶⁷

Several significant rivers (notably the Warche and the Amblève) course through the mountains and hills of the Ardennes, and there is a complex network of springs, brooks, and smaller tributaries. Though not major traffic arteries and often not navigable, these were still vitally important to the monasteries and their agricultural settlements. Charters from the Ardennes bestow rights to use local waters, "both still and running," and highlight the many agricultural and economic uses for water resources. The "very clear and healthful" waters fueled mills, filled millponds, and channeled fish into human-made weirs.⁶⁸

Throughout the houses' history, fishing was one of the most important uses of water resources. The monks of Stavelot created and maintained their own fisheries; they built and restored mills at Leignon, and created a millpond that could be used for fishing.⁶⁹ When they restored a mill at Calchus, the monks repaired the mill pond and its fisheries, and employed professional fishermen. The monasteries also collected fish and fish products as part of tithing payments. The property of Wakendor gave the monks an annual tribute of fish, and tithes from Calchus included fish cakes composed of brined fish, grain, and pepper.⁷⁰ The estate had professional fishers who did both weir and open-river fishing, using nets thrown from boats and setting out seines.⁷¹

The monks of Prüm shared rights to a fishery on the Mosel with the

Count of Luxembourg. These rights were minutely regulated. According to Caesarius, “If the count sends out fishers with six boats, then we send out three. If he sends four, we can send two, but if he is content with sending out only two fishers, then we will be content with one.”⁷² Caesarius then points out that the count was one of Prüm’s great landholders, and that he also had interests in Amblève, which concerned the monks because “the property is located not far from Prüm.” Because of the close connection of the properties in Caesarius’s comments, it is likely that the monks enjoyed similar fishing rights on the Amblève. Though Stavelot’s sources do not record active fishing of that river’s “abundant waters,” given the importance of both the villa and the river to Stavelot, it is a near certainty that the monks or their dependents also fished there.

Rivers were also a source of energy; water-powered mills were an important part of the agricultural landscape, and their presence shows the pervasiveness of monastic control of water resources. Mills were a visible sign of the wealth and status of their owners, and of human control of the landscape. There were water mills in Gaul by the beginning of first century, one second-century milling complex has been excavated near Arles, and the Mosel had a mill by the 350s. In England, Richard Holt suggests that watermills were used from Late Roman times into the early Middle Ages, “probably without interruption.” On the continent, monastic records show that throughout the Carolingian Empire, most peasants had access to mills within at least five kilometers of their villages. The 820 polyptych from Saint-Germain-du-Pres lists eighty-four mills and a survey of the Loire valley shows that before the year 750 there were already at least 138 mills in operation.⁷³

Unfortunately, there is not enough surviving information or archaeological evidence to compile similar figures for the Ardennes. Nonetheless, the scattered evidence suggests that the rivers of the Ardennes flowed through numerous monastic mills. Surviving documents from Stavelot-Malmedy name at least eighteen mills on fourteen properties, and Germigny controlled a multiple mill. Since, as Caesarius pointed out, the abbot of Prüm was allowed to construct a mill and run a bakery and brewery at every property, it is possible that there were far more than the forty mills specifically recorded in the Urbar. The value of such mills can be seen from the records of Villance, where Prüm controlled two mills that each paid forty measures of grain and three breweries that tithed 300 measures of oats annually.⁷⁴ Sources from Saint-Hubert are not very detailed; the monks controlled at least sixteen properties with mills, and many of those also had ovens or bakeries. Several of the properties had more than one mill, such as the property where the monks received permission to build a third mill on the same site. Most of the mills were also associated with fishing, such as the property with “two fisheries in the water above the mill.”⁷⁵

The properties that controlled mills also had arable lands with granaries,

pastures for large animal flocks, meadows harvested for hay, barns, vineyards, and woodlands full of pigs and coppices. Saint-Hubert's priory of Chateau-Porcien controlled "the cultivated and uncultivated lands that are held by the *vilicus* Godeslarus, with the mill located next to the great bridge and the meadows, woodlands and vineyards ... and a bakehouse subject to the bann along with all the census payments and the universal rights to shipping fees."⁷⁶ A charter from 947 describes two of Stavelot's properties with mills. One included a mill, a church, and a *familia* of fifty people, and the other included a mill, woodlands, and twenty-five *famuli*. The manor of Nohas had mills and a large amount of woodland, and was described as "a good *curtis*, but badly devastated by its enemies; having good fields, a brewery, a mill and a large woodland."⁷⁷

The mills that dotted the landscape ground into flour the cereal crops produced by the region's traditional agricultural infrastructure. Although throughout medieval Europe some forests were cleared to make way for the expansion of arable lands, arable lands were often managed alongside, rather than in opposition to, forests and woodlands. In 824, a priest named Oduinus gave Stavelot-Malmedy a property along with servants, houses, and buildings, and "with certain fields for plowing, meadows, woodlands, pastures and swamps." In 958 or 959, Theutgerus and his wife, Uda, gave the monastery a "well-built *curtis* and its "lands, buildings, meadows, fields, woods and waters." Stavelot's property at Crouia, located along the Mosel, had both vines and "fields used for the cultivation of grain."⁷⁸

The properties of Bourcy and Bure both had extensive woodlands. When twelve manses on the properties were donated to Stavelot in 891 (two years before Prüm's *Urbar* was compiled), they contained "arable fields, meadows, woodlands, and waters."⁷⁹ We learn more about Bure through the *Urbar*, since Prüm also held ten manses in the villa. The property had forests with good pannage (owing 100 carts of firewood and 100 pigs valued at the high rate of one ounce of silver each) and significant vineyards (owing either three *fuder* of wine or 45 *modia* of grapes). The estate was of value to both monasteries, and in 1222 Caesarius wrote that "Bure is a rich property." It was controlled by the Count of Rupe and generated tithes "from the rich church."⁸⁰ Both properties were just north of Bastogne, which also had a mixed agricultural regime, and was also controlled by both houses. According to Prüm's records, Bastogne had pastures that yielded six carts of hay, and an unrecorded amount of arable land where both rye and wheat were grown. There were clearly woodlands, as the residents had a relatively high pig tithe and they were obligated to provide shingles, rods, and boards for fencing. There is some evidence for a slight decline in the property in the late ninth century, as the *Urbar* notes that there is also "deserted" land, perhaps due to the Viking invasions.⁸¹

There is little direct evidence for the crops or production methods associated with "cultivated and fallow fields" (*cultus et incultus*). Even

though the early medieval Ardennes were comparatively not well suited for it, traditional field agriculture would still have centered on grain production. Most evidence of cereal production at monastic sites comes from taxes and payments in kind that were levied by the monks. For Stavelot-Malmedy, we are given a glimpse of the range and variety of these tithes through a charter from 1087 that records some of the preparations for a special celebration on the anniversary of the dedication of the tower at Stavelot's church. The abbot ordered that several of the customary food tithes (normally used for the Feast of St. John the Baptist and the Feast of St. Remacle) be diverted for this purpose. The food tithes (to be repeated annually) came from several different estates and included fish, grapes, wine, peaches, one hundred eggs, sixty gourds, and a pound of pepper.⁸² Cereal production can also be traced by the regular *annona* or grain tax paid to the monasteries. Calchus owed Stavelot an *annona*, and the *villa publica* of Crouia paid Stavelot a grain tax. This is the only document from Stavelot that explicitly links the grain tax to agricultural production, noting that the holdings included "fields used for the cultivation of grain for the tithe."⁸³

Once again, the scattered evidence of fiscal management from Stavelot can be augmented with the data from Prüm. That house's concern for grain production is seen throughout the Urbar, which (variably) records payments in grain, types of grain grown on certain estates, and the size of the cultivated land. When it was measured, arable land was evaluated in the number of *modia* of grain that could be sown in the fields. The estates for which grain payments are recorded owed the monks more than 13,000 *modia* of grain annually! Furthermore, both the monks producing the survey in 893 and Caesarius in 1222 show a deep familiarity with the processes and problems of grain harvesting. The Urbar frequently details the amount of human and animal labor devoted to plowing fields, sowing, harvesting, threshing, milling, and transporting grains, even in some instances specifying seasonal tasks.

When compared to later medieval monastic records, the documents from Stavelot-Malmedy and the other Ardennes houses yield relatively little in terms of specific information on crops, land use, and agricultural practice.⁸⁴ Yet what details there are again suggest a mixed, diverse, and actively managed landscape. Caesarius's comments on agriculture and land management serve as evidence of the depth of monastic agricultural knowledge and as a possible explanation for the silence of many monastic documents about the details of agriculture: "The manner in which the holders of *mansi* plow, sow, gather, and deliver the harvest on time to the barns, and of how they must make fences and thresh the grain is known by almost everyone. For that reason, we have not recorded that which is already generally known or is able to be known."⁸⁵

Protecting Resources: Monks as Property Managers

Though we can only reconstruct the property management practices of Stavelot-Malmedy in the broadest strokes, some case studies allow glimpses of the problems that the monks faced and the strategies they used to solve them. We can also see the care and concern with which abbots strategically and energetically restored and protected their properties. Stavelot's estate of Calchus holds keys to understanding the diversity of the natural resources and economic activities of the Ardennes. It appears in both the charter record and in religious narrative, showing how the monastic economic world impinged on and was reflected in religious cultural productions. The ways that the monks of Stavelot recorded and interacted with the property also demonstrate the degree to which they were actively involved in maintaining, enhancing, and in many cases restoring and protecting the agricultural productivity of the pastoral landscape.

A story included in the tenth-century portions of the *Miracula* introduces the estate, explaining that it had productive fisheries, connecting it to broader spiritual goals, and hinting at some management problems. The author noted that "it was the custom to set over them a monk from the monastery about whose faithfulness there could be no doubt."⁸⁶ At the time described by the miracle, an elderly monk named Leutfrid had been the supervisor for a year. After describing his well-established fishing skills, the story takes on a traditional Biblical theme: the miraculous catch. The miracle took place on the feast day of St. Remacle, which increased the demand for fish for the monastic table. Yet Leutfrid failed to catch any fish. Worried, he prayed to Remacle and suddenly a wave swamped over the boat, leaving a fish and a puddle of water. Inspired, he began to put his seines back in and quickly caught enough fish both for the feast day and for distribution to the poor. Through the incorporation of details about the practical ways that monks administered and used the natural world and then tying it into a direct spiritual context, the monks supported a view of their resource use as "right."

Despite their attempt to assert both practical and spiritual authority over Calchus, when it reappears in the records about a century later, the property had been sorely neglected: the main house had been ignored and the granary, the cow barn, and the bakery and brewery complex had been allowed to fall into ruin. The abbot, Cuono, added that the mill above the Mosel had become completely unused and decided to drastically restructure the estate. He gave oversight of the property to a hunter named Hugo, placing at his disposal all of the resources that he would need to rebuild the fisc. Hugo was given rights to oversee the monastic woodlands above the estate and to use whatever materials he needed. He was also granted control of "all appurtenances, that is the tithes, the proceeds and rents, the mills, the brewery and bakehouse, and anything else that is seen to be the legitimate

property of the slaves who are seen to belong to that property.”⁸⁷

This charter allows a rare glimpse of Stavelot’s managerial practices, as Cuono mentions the administrators who worked on the estate. Calchus had a deacon, a cellarer, and fishers, who seem to have been in charge of the *villici*, *scabini*, and “all other people serving there.” Hugo could make independent decisions about the day-to-day running of the estate, control the actions of the residents and the other specialists, and make changes in management. Yet Cuono and the monks did not give him complete liberty; they continued to be actively involved in the long-term running of the estate. Hugo was not able to alter any of the customs or change any of the boundaries without the prior consent of the monks.

The monks also kept control of the estate’s tithes, taxes, and income, even determining to some extent which resources would be produced there. Every year, Calchus was to give the cellarer of Stavelot sixty measures of grain, 1,400 eggs, one and a half *ama* of honey or mead, and sixty fish cakes. The monks closely managed the tithe of fish cakes, specifying that the *villici* were to provide the fish and the pepper, and the *curtis* the grain. The fiscal residents were also required to deliver twenty-four pounds of flax each year at Epiphany. At least twenty pounds were to be sent directly to the monastery “without excuses.” The residents could, however, keep four pounds for their own use. Specifically, they could use it to repair their fishing nets, so that it would not be necessary for Stavelot’s *camerarius* to give them materials for that purpose later. This detailed discussion of the products owed as tribute and the management of their distribution and even their use is evidence for the degree to which monastic leaders were involved with determining the agricultural activities of their properties.

The estate also owed several different monetary payments, which Cuono defined with great care and precision. The priest of Calchus was to pay 23 solidi at Easter and on the feast of St. Remigius. The estate’s census of 10 solidi was due twice a year, at Epiphany and then in the middle of May. Every other year on the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, Hugo was to deliver 60 solidi to Stavelot, giving 12 to the *camerarius* and the rest to the priest. This showed a concern that the tax burden be distributed through the different social and economic layers of the estate and that it be predictably paid. Though he handed over renovation and daily management of the estate to Hugo, the abbot was clearly determined to watch affairs at Calchus a bit more closely and to prevent another decline. Though these details survive because the estate was extraordinarily neglected, Cuono’s engagement was not an isolated incident. Far from being absentee landlords, several of Stavelot’s abbots demonstrated an active interest in restoring and repairing individual properties.

Because of the amount of details surviving in his letters and charters, Wibald’s administrative concerns and actions are especially visible. One of his most prominent projects at Stavelot was the extensive transformation

and fortification of the villa of Longia, given to Stavelot in Lothar III's golden bull.⁸⁸ Stavelot had long had an interest in and perhaps partial control of the villa, which had been refortified once before.⁸⁹ Longia had been built, according to Wibald, "for the protection of all of our lands." Because of the importance of its fortress (*castellum*), the monastery had assigned it many properties. However, by the twelfth century it was largely neglected and uninhabited. Because of his growing concerns about the villa and the state of repair of the *castellum*, Wibald began to rebuild and reclaim the property.

Longia was repaired and completely reorganized, with an emphasis on defense and agricultural productivity. Wibald renovated the fortifications and added a new tower, then assigned 100 solidi annually for repairs and upkeep. Yet he was still concerned that "because of the solitude that was around the *castellum* and its buildings," financial resources alone would not guarantee the property's survival, since it was too difficult to supply the necessary "equipment and munitions and food supplies."⁹⁰

The perceived solitude of the fortress was exaggerated by its separation from the villa of Longia, which was next to the river rather than the fortress. Although this was good for transport, it was exposed to threats. Therefore, Wibald decided to relocate the villa to a valley east of the mountain, beneath the *castellum*. He set aside some portions of the mountain for potential expansion of the fortifications, but offered the remainder of the mountain and the valley to the residents. This land distribution was to enable them to move their households "without impediment." The relocated villa would then be in charge of providing supplies and support for the fortress.

Wibald's primary concern seems to have been to provide the fortress with an active and vibrant village, and his subsequent actions show that he was willing to cede away many privileges and possible incomes in favor of convincing the villagers to maintain the estates. As with Cuono's restoration of Calchus, another of Wibald's steps was to set up a new administrator, a man named Nicholas. Yet whereas Cuono had retained many rights for himself and the monastery, Wibald chose to relinquish ultimate oversight; Nicholas and his descendants would be allowed to exercise full authority on behalf of the monastery. Wibald also took the unusual step of investing the residents directly in the estate's success. Though the castle would remain in monastic hands, he gave the residents of Longia all of the land, gardens, cultivated spaces, houses, and other buildings associated with the villa.

Wibald then gave them these properties in perpetuity. He also freed them from a number of duties, taxes, and fees, and set up additional taxexempt clauses for any colonists who decided to move to the estate from elsewhere. As confirmation of his intent, Wibald then specified that no successive abbot would be allowed to change the status of the estate, or alienate the properties in any way, or impose any new customs without the consent of the entire monastic community. The one duty still clearly imposed on the villa was that they provide hospitality to the abbot when he

visited, the cost of which is clearly established.

As this example shows, concern for the management and overhaul of nonproductive properties extended to the assarting or occupation of lands not yet actively incorporated into the agricultural economy. Stavelot-Malmedy's abbots supported "new cultivations" and the transformation of "wilderness" or "waste" into part of the domesticated, pastoral landscape. In 1092, Abbot Rodulf of Malmedy struck a bargain with Richer, a canon of St. Dyonisius in Liège, who had asked for rights to use a portion of a mountain near the villa of Sclacins. Richer believed that the land on the "dry and uncultivated" mountain could be made healthy (*salus*) in the future, and he sought permission to cultivate it.⁹¹ Rodulf assented, and guaranteed that if Richer were able to bring the barren land into cultivation, it would be given to him and his successors as a precarial holding, in exchange for an annual payment of 4 solidi and 1 denarius.

Twelve years later, in 1104, the land reappears in Stavelot-Malmedy's records. Richer had apparently succeeded in his task: Abbot Folmar notes that the monks of St. Dyonisius had been given land that "once was entirely infertile, much of which they had converted to the use of our church."⁹² Richer had established a vineyard on the mountain, and the abbot granted the canons the land with the condition that they continue to pay the tax to the priest at Malmedy.

Whether by restoring the infrastructure of a failing fisc, rebuilding and creating steady supplies for an important strategic fortress, or commissioning the assarting of uncultivated lands, the abbots of Stavelot-Malmedy made daily decisions that augmented and protected their landed interests. These decisions also worked toward maintaining productivity and creating a sustainable agricultural economy; such investment of capital and labor (and social authority via the many witnesses to these charter agreements) supported not only present but also future success. Discussions of monastic agriculture often emphasize the importance of the fact that monastic institutions had a unique interest in the long-term future of their economies and agricultures. They could make investments and exchanges (notably the many "short-term" precarial cessions) that were designed to create or protect income and success decades and generations in the future.

But it wasn't just monks who thought about the long-term future; piety and power were connected, and donations of property to monasteries carried eternal rewards. As Matthew Innes has pointed out, "Giving land cannot be seen as a static or normative structure, a standard form of piety.... [It was] an active phenomenon which created bonds between church and society."⁹³ Two of Stavelot's charters express this idea well. Both contain references to Luke 16:9, citing the biblical passage to remind not only the participants, but also posterity, of the inescapable links between landed wealth, monetary value, and the social and religious bonds of power and fidelity: "So I say to you, use your worldly wealth to win friends for

yourselves, so that when money is a thing of the past you may be received into an eternal home.”⁹⁴

Yet it is also important to remember that monastic land claims were not all abstract ideas of religious rights, hermitage, and pastoral care. Monks were astute and careful estate managers, concerned with real property that could be measured, valued, and described in both legal and administrative ways. Part of the monks’ success in such long-range planning was related to their control over written records, their ties to both secular and religious allies, and their consequent ability to work within multiple frameworks of value and assessment. Stavelot-Malmedy’s properties extended over a wide landscape that was shared by other interest groups, divided into competing zones of power, and used by people with different goals, visions, and even methods of valuing land. The monks of the Ardennes developed a suitably flexible system for valuing and measuring the properties they controlled. While the discussion that follows may strike some as evidence for a disorganized and decentralized medieval world, I believe that this flexibility of “value,” of defining authority, and of marking ownership contributed to the success of these monastic communities.

Measuring and Valuing the Productive Landscape

Though there is no single document for Stavelot-Malmedy as informative as the Urbar, there is a moment when we can see the result of five centuries of the steady accumulation and development of monastic land. Between 1130 and 1131, Wibald assembled summaries of Stavelot-Malmedy’s holdings, listing the properties controlled by each house, the properties belonging to Stavelot’s *advocatia*, the churches subordinate to Stavelot, and the tithes and dues owed to the abbey.⁹⁵ These reveal that Stavelot controlled 400 manses and Malmedy controlled 328, and Stavelot’s advocacy held 300 additional manses on behalf of the abbey.⁹⁶ This further demonstrates how closely monastic spiritual identity was supported (rather than threatened) by secular power and economic wealth.⁹⁷

As with many houses, Stavelot-Malmedy’s agricultural control of the local landscape had begun with the process of establishing boundaries and marking off monastic holdings. A survey of the boundary clauses that the monasteries used to claim and define their territories shows some of the ways that the monks perceived and recorded their landscape. When Sigibert endowed the houses with territory around 648, he established a protected zone in “an area of land measured for at least twelve *milia* on all sides of the monastery.”⁹⁸ This donation of a large portion of the royal *forestis* was a key phase in the monasteries’ history. Yet only a generation later, in 670, Childeric II removed half of the initial grant and established new boundaries.⁹⁹ It is this charter that establishes the monasteries’ first official

boundary clause; this smaller territory became the core of the monasteries' holdings and was reconfirmed in 814 by Louis the Pious.

The 648 boundary clause is one of only two complete "perambulation boundaries" to survive in Stavelot-Malmedy's early medieval records. There have been numerous attempts on the parts of local historians to reconstruct the exact boundary, but many of the points are contested due to over a millennium of fluctuations in settlement and naming practices.¹⁰⁰ The clause is filled not with measures and distances, but with local place names and landholding memory, suggesting that it was intended to remind local residents of the boundaries rather than to stake a claim that would have been legible from an outside perspective. The boundary ran, in part, "along that same Ennal, up until the place where it is joined by the brook the Glain, and then beyond the Glain up to Arbrefontaine. And from Arbrefontaine, to the Amblève next to the *Siggino Aviaco*, where Gerelaicus had a royal fishery." The most prominent features in this boundary are natural features: the rivers and streams. The villages, the fishery, and the *via Mansuerisca* then highlight the presence of human settlement and agricultural production in the region.

The other early medieval topographical boundary is from Cugnon, and both houses' boundaries suggest a landscape in which physical features and landmarks such as rivers, fortresses, forests, and occasionally streets are more established and authoritative boundaries than abstract property lines. First, Cugnon is described as encircled or bounded by the Semois River. A second, more explicit boundary clause follows, in which a fortress serves as the central feature, with a series of smaller boundaries radiating from it. The boundary includes features of both the natural and human-made landscapes, including forests and rivers "and also the little fishery on the stream called Alisna, where the stone quarry is located."¹⁰¹

By the middle of the 900s, when boundary clauses become more common in Stavelot's charters, they contain fewer of these topographical details. One remarkable exception to this trend is a charter that includes a single tree "that the people called 'pekeruol'" as the anchor of one boundary.¹⁰² The other exceptions are rivers, which continued to be important natural boundaries. Instead of presenting a walkable "map" of the terrain, later boundaries describe the land in relation to other properties or landlords. As an example, one property was recorded in 968 with the following boundary clause: "next to the river Sura ... between these boundaries: on the one side [the lands] of Duke Frederic, on the other those of Rodulfus, and on the other of Gundulf and Wizelinus." Another was also defined (ca. 947) in relation to other landholders: "above the river called the Letia, within the limits of three other men: on one side there is the territory of St. Hubert the Confessor, on the other side Gozbertus holds property, on the third side Leutgerus holds land, and on the fourth, Odilo." The monks also named saints (rather than the monasteries) as the landholders in the boundaries of

Havallies, which lay “between the boundaries of St. Remacle and St. Lambert.”¹⁰³ The active identification of the saints themselves as interested parties can be linked with the tenth-century growth of the saints’ cults in the region and with increased competition for both patrons and pilgrims. Being able to describe the saint as a property owner or a “neighbor” was a religious and social event, but as Rosenwein points out, “one that could be entirely routine.” In effect, “Saint Peter figured so prominently in most of the transactions with Cluny, as if a nearby landholder, that to ‘deal’ with him was indeed to do business with a neighbor.”¹⁰⁴

The reasons behind this change of emphasis away from topography and toward details of ownership or of preexisting social and economic relationships cannot be fully determined, but it suggests a mutable way of describing and delineating land. The shift in boundary clauses could be partially or even entirely a product of the fact that Merovingian royal chanceries produced the two earliest boundary clauses and that the later clauses, which place more emphasis on local personal and political relationships, were composed by monastic scribes or local political leaders with monks, donors, and other local figures present as participants.¹⁰⁵ The growing prominence of describing lands by the neighboring landholders may also be a sign that population density was increasing, causing settlement crowding.

Yet the changes might also suggest a changing sense of the relative importance of various ways of “reading” a landscape. Whereas the earliest charters were based on multiple points in the natural, agricultural, and political landscapes, the later charters place much more emphasis on relationships. The earliest charters carved out new patterns of ownership within an already complex landscape, and therefore the acknowledgment of multiple (potentially contested) points may have been necessary to ensure a clear definition of the new territories. On the other hand, the later boundary clauses’ recorders seem to have been more interested in changes to the ownership or control of older, previously defined areas and the alterations that donations would cause to patterns of power and control.

It was not until Wibald’s abbacy that boundary clauses containing an explicit emphasis on topography reappeared. Again, only two survive, but the difference between these and the tenth-century clauses that focused on property ownership is striking. In 1137, Wibald convinced Lothar III to confirm all of Stavelot’s previous holdings and to make several new land grants, including numerous properties that had formerly belonged to the church in Aachen. This was a major redistribution of property, much to Stavelot’s benefit, and the boundary clause is fittingly explicit, noting for example that the grant included “thirty houses on one part of the road, twenty-five of them located in an uninterrupted row.”¹⁰⁶

This boundary in some ways returns to the Merovingian models with their emphasis on landmarks and “walkable” contours: “from that *domus*

which used to belong to the bishop of Cambrai up to the earthwork on that side that runs to the bridge at Haruinus.” It also includes some land measures, noting that the properties included “five houses and the six *bonuaria* of land that surround them, and seven *bonuaria* of land in the villa that is called Vals.”¹⁰⁷ This inclusion of measurement terms is echoed in Longia’s charter, which reports the new villa’s location: Wibald promises to “distribute the remaining mountain and valley ... [which is] 300 *pedes* in length and more than 60 in breadth, and is set within 4 boundaries.”¹⁰⁸ This clause acknowledges preexisting boundaries, and by supplying a measure instead of a perambulation, hearkens back to the very first of Stavelot’s charters, which established a boundary of twelve *milia* around the houses.

It is no surprise that Wibald’s boundaries resemble the early medieval ones, since Wibald was in many ways preoccupied with retrieving, retaining, and clearly defining monastic properties. The early medieval boundaries served the same function—the kings were giving the monasteries their core properties for the first time. As the monks established their control and authority over these properties, and as settlement in the region deepened, they did not need to be as rigorous in asserting geographic boundaries. This was especially true in places where local customs, relationships, and memory of physical boundaries clearly distinguished individual territories. However, over time this way of defining land by owner appears to have been insufficient and slippery, especially when ownership itself was disputed. Lands formerly controlled by the monasteries had been alienated, and centuries of political and social conflict had reduced both the permanence and the clarity of monastic possessions. By the twelfth century, conflict was brewing throughout the Low Countries, and when combined with Wibald’s aggressive tenurial reforms, this necessitated a return to a clear, precise, and indisputable claim on the physical limits and extent of monastically controlled lands.

The marking off of boundaries was only one part of monastic attempts to make the landscape legible and to measure it and record its value. The monks had access to many levels and systems of evaluating forests and properties, including both quantitative and qualitative measures. The records of Stavelot-Malmedy reveal a deep-seated sense that these properties could, in fact, be comparatively valued in spite of (and with the help of) a multiplicity of words and methods for property evaluation.

Starting in the late 800s, monks started to denote the value of their properties by adding qualifier words to charter descriptions. This could be tied to either increased specialization of land use or to a monastic attempt to clarify holdings in response to the declining power of their Carolingian patrons. In the case of forests and woodlands, the earliest surviving records only use the terms *silva* or *forestis*—distinguishing the areas from nonforested land, but not from one another. But after 891, several *silvae* were described as *bona* and *optima*, that is, of “good” or “best” quality.¹⁰⁹ The

monks could also describe forests according to size, such as the woodland at Baldav that they labeled as a *silva magna*, or “great woodland.” The property of Nonas included a *silvarum magnam copiam*, or “a great amount of woodlands,” further suggesting that the Ardennes did not suffer “irreversible decline” from Carolingian clearances.¹¹⁰

Yet these size qualifiers cannot be considered quantitative measures; at best, they are comparative valuations. Although it is clear that medieval scribes used these words to make distinctions between various woodlands, the terms appear so infrequently that little can be ascertained about what the monks of Stavelot and their patrons understood by the terms. As with the terms *silva* and *forestis*, much of the medieval use of such terminology can only be understood in context. Unfortunately, in all of these instances, there is insufficient context, and the relative size or quality of any of these forests cannot be determined. The two “great woodlands” appear in the same charter, and the only other woodland in the charter that they can be compared to is an equally vague *silva bona* or “good-quality woodland.”

Other forests and woodlands were measured more explicitly. In the ninth century, two of Stavelot’s forests were measured in *bonuaria* (about a quarter of an acre). In one instance, an unnamed property was recorded as including “both arable lands and fields and also a woodland of sixty *bonuaria*.” Furthermore, the property controlled 130 *bonuaria* of “fields of pasture.”¹¹¹ *Bonuaria* could be applied to both forested and non-forested land, and at the villa of Stratella, which had an unmeasured *silva*, 4 manses, and 2 *bonuaria*, the woods were clearly distinguished from whatever land was measured in *bonuaria*. Stavelot’s final charter using the term *bonuaria* describes Amarne’s smaller woodland of five *bonuaria*. This charter, unlike the other examples, attaches both measurements and value to the property. The five *bonuaria* of forest together with the villa’s (unmeasured) arable land were considered worth the payment of a *pretium* of 40 silver solidi.¹¹²

The monks had an interest in and an ability to measure and assess land, but they did not measure all things, and they did not measure or value consistently. This makes it nearly impossible to evaluate these measurements now, or to use them to assess the wealth of the houses or the extent of their woodlands. In Amarne, the value of the woodland is inaccessible because it was not valued separately from other property. Another case is equally frustrating because a forest is the only part of the monastery’s holdings that is *not* included in a property measurement.

Wibald’s property list from 1131 contains very few details, and only one individual unit of land is measured: Lignieres. It controlled two *quadrantes* of land (this is the only use of that measurement term in Stavelot’s documents) and three hundred manses, “excluding the *silva* of Freires.”¹¹³ Another charter suggests a possible reason for this exclusion; the residents of Freires made annual payments for usufruct rights, and its advocate had limited hunting privileges. Yet this was not simply an exclusion of forests from the

measurement, since these three hundred manses included other forests, such as Rupe, which still fell under the royal forest ban.¹¹⁴

These views of medieval land measurement show the use of multiple terms, inconsistent decisions (even within single documents) about what to measure, and even mixed application of measurement terms. A more detailed investigation of one particular instance of forest measurement reinforces how subjective the use of medieval measurements could be. The history of the monastery's immediate bounds includes several distinct attempts at measuring and demarcating this land, none of which are entirely clear to a modern audience, but all of which would have meant something to medieval readers of the charters. Recall that in the initial foundation charter from ca. 648 (HR 2), Sigibert gave the monastery twelve *milia* of forested land. This was located to the "right" of the monastery (though determining right and left in this instance is of course itself problematic).¹¹⁵ He ordered the land to be measured out, but the charter as it is preserved does not include any boundary information, and it is possible that the royal chancery never recorded the result of that measurement.

Detailed boundaries were also absent when Childeric reduced the size of monastic lands in 670 (HR 6). He noted only that the portions of the *forestis dominicus* had initially extended twelve *milia* in length and in breadth. Some of the properties included in Sigibert's initial twelve *milia* can be identified after the fact, because Childeric withdrew (among other properties) the royal *curtes* of Amblève, Charancho, and Ledernao from the grant. This action reportedly reduced the area of *forestis* controlled by the monasteries from twelve to six *milia*. The remaining six-*milia* portion was then detailed in the full boundary clause.¹¹⁶

These royal charters record a large, deliberate shift in the measure of the monastic *forestis*. By the ninth century there was also a more subtle shift. In a charter from 814 (HR 25), Louis the Pious reconfirmed Childeric's 670 charter. Yet by that point even the extent of Sigibert's grant was in doubt. Louis explained that Sigibert had originally given the monastery "from his own *forestis*, twelve *leugas* measured on all sides, or which were smaller by some degree."¹¹⁷ He then summarized Childeric's decision. Invoking the rhetoric of woodland isolation, he claims that the monks had asked Childeric that "six *leugas* be taken away from it for the purpose of providing an undisturbed place for the monks residing there, and that six of them be confirmed by his order, and also that he order it marked off from all sides." Louis then reissued the same boundary clause.¹¹⁸

Though there are no substantial changes to the boundary, it is presented with slight changes in grammar and spelling, suggesting (as with Childeric's use of Sigibert's charter) a reliance on—but not direct copying of—the earlier royal document. A clearer (and more problematic) sign of this rewording of the past document is found in the measurement terms. The charters of both Sigibert and Childeric recorded that the portions of the *forestis* granted to

the monastery were originally twelve *milia* in measure; Louis's chancery uses the term *leuga*. In this substitution lies evidence for more gradual changes that could occur over time that might cast doubt for some medieval participants on the exact nature of a legally defined area.

This series of charters, which shows a change in terminology from *milia* to *leuga* but no associated change in number of units, presents a problem since the units were not at all equivalent. A *milia* (or *milia passum*) was one thousand paces, but a *leuga* was the equivalent of 1.5 *milia*.¹¹⁹ Thus, the substitution of *leuga* for *milia* by the Carolingians not only changed the terminology of the initial grant, but also altered the perception of scale. This shift of the measure would also affect the smaller, six-*milia* boundary. By changing the *milia* to *leuga*, the smaller boundary increased (on parchment only!) from 6,000 paces to 9,000 paces even though the boundary clauses reflect the same physical borders. This suggests a scribal error based on a false understanding of *milia*, a term no longer in great currency by the 800s. How should we respond to what is seemingly an error made out of ignorance or a failure of state record-keeping apparatus?

First, it is important to note that the term *milia* does not appear to have been frequently used in Stavelot's documents: its only other appearance was in Cugnon's foundational charter. Though it is possible that Louis's scribes did not fully understand the terms used by the Merovingian scribes, it is also possible that they considered them to be anachronistic or old-fashioned. The later scribes replaced the early terms, thus creating an accidental or unconscious shift, a reminder of the power the chancery had to change and alter language and usage.

Yet it may not be that simple, since the inconsistency in terms is exacerbated by the fact that by 814, Louis did not consistently acknowledge the history of the grant. First, recall that he added the phrase "or which were smaller by some degree." Then, despite having mentioned the reductions in the past, the charter concludes with the phrase, "But, just as the mentioned *forestis* and the now mentioned tithe and chapel are confirmed to be unchanged (*constata*) by [our] forerunners." This dismissal of the fluctuations that Louis himself had mentioned above seems a deliberate attempt to smooth over change and emphasize stability. This attempt to ignore conflict is not unique; charters could trumpet victories or erase tensions in order to create new, more peaceful relationships in the wake of conflict.

Though it is not clear if the memory of the conflict was affected, the erasure of *milia* was complete. In 950, Otto I again confirmed the smaller boundaries, adopting Louis's *leuga*.¹²⁰ Then, around the year 1000, Heriger of Lobbes again used the term *leuga* when discussing Sigibert's grant in the *Vita Remacli*. He reported that the grant was of "twelve *leugas* of land in a circle around the monastery."¹²¹ In addition to perpetuating the Carolingian use of *leuga* instead of *milia*, he explained that a *leuga* was an area of land that was a Gallic measure, equal to twelve *stadia*, or 1,500 paces (or 1.5 *milia*,

which is the right ratio).¹²²

Louis's ninth-century scribes saw a written word and changed it. Otto's scribes perpetuated this change, and then later Heriger, working from their charters, read, understood, and accepted the later documents, even though he knew a milia and a leuga were not equivalent. This discrepancy, rather than pointing to underdeveloped medieval archival systems, is instead an argument for the growing dominance of the written word, and the bureaucratization Carolingian chanceries.¹²³ As decisions became more separated from local knowledge and more closely linked to the preexisting documentary record, written evidence also began to equal (if not surpass) oral testimony and local tradition. One of the hallmarks of bureaucracies is their attempt to impose an order on the increasingly far-flung lands they claim and control. Their goals, according to Scott, include the "simplification, legibility, and manipulation" of complex information or processes. Such simplification creates "an overall, aggregate, synoptic view ... making possible a high degree of schematic knowledge, control, and manipulation."¹²⁴ Innovations in vocabulary (such as *forestis*), attempts to regularize documentary production, the divorcing of an abstract measure of property at the royal level from a sense of the "on-the-ground" boundary, and even Wibald's list of properties can be linked to larger attempts by early and central medieval governments to produce coherent ways of dealing with land.

Yet we need to recognize that "states" were not the only powers interested in creating such legibility. Daniel Smail shows similar processes at work in notarial offices in fourteenth-century Marseille, and Robert Berkhofer has demonstrated that in eleventh-century France, monastic communities could use their written authority to create a "written comprehension" of their lands.¹²⁵ Monastic charters, cartularies, and especially polyptychs are a local form of the same function: creating a legible, controllable, and taxable landscape that the landlords have a "synoptic" vision of.¹²⁶

At a local level, variety and plurality could and did still flourish. As demonstrated in Prüm's Urbar (and even in the royally sponsored *Domesday* book) local variety of practice and language impinged on such attempts to control and synthesize. The documents from Stavelot-Malmedy demonstrate that this tension between written standardization and local irregularity could create both problems and opportunities. The closer the production of records was to the people living and working in landscape, the more they reflect differences in practice, value, and use. Variety in record-keeping allowed for flexibility of management. Yet at the same time, we see the monks attempting to establish at least some regularity of language, control, and value so that their claims and authority did not rest solely in memory and custom, and so they would not need to be renegotiated with every generation.

This tension plays out most directly in Stavelot-Malmedy's attempts to report precarial payments, which cluster around the tenth century and are the only land values that they in any way systematically recorded in the surviving documents. These were dues that people who were short-term or lifetime "renters" of monastic properties owed as an annual payment; often these contracts were good for several generations. These payments were associated with the land itself, but are not absolute property values because any number of factors could influence the payment amount. John Nightengale points out that it is hard to understand the motives for precarial agreements because often the only evidence for them are the charters themselves. Cluny often returned the precarial grants back to the communities in question, in effect creating a shifting and "continually reinforced" set of land exchanges.¹²⁷

It is important here to remember that the abbots of Stavelot-Malmedy were not the only people seeking to control the local landscape. For example, several of the properties partially controlled by Stavelot-Malmedy (Bastogne, Konzen, and Theux) also returned cash rents to the Marienstift in Aachen, and Bastogne also owed dues to Prüm.¹²⁸ Nightengale observed that "a notable feature of the precarial agreements is the extent to which both parties already possessed adjacent landholdings. Proximity of landholding appears to be a more important factor behind each transaction than links with the abbey's overlord."¹²⁹ The complexity of the tenurial landscape and competition with other administrative groups is a clear reason that the monks may have attempted to add some structure to a series of individual and fluid agreements.

Tenth-century agreements demonstrate the flexibility of these precarial values. In 947, the monks of Stavelot entered into an agreement with a man named Lantbert. In return for his donation of a single manse, Lantbert received usufruct rights to a second nearby manse owned by the monastery. For the use of this land, Lantbert owed the monastery two *denarii* a year. Yet only twenty years earlier, the same land had been let out for an annual payment of one *solidus* (twelve *denarii*). Though the agreement from 926 was not necessarily renewable, a possible explanation for the renewed (or extended) "lease" for a lower annual payment may rest not in any sudden decline of property quality, but in the dynamics of the surrounding landscape. The monks may have been, in fact, eager to let someone else manage this monastic property for several decades, since it was located between the borders of four other landholders.¹³⁰

Lantbert's payment is comparable to a similar exchange from 959. In that case, a noble named Rambert and his wife and daughter wished to establish a precarial relationship with the monks. In order to obtain usufruct rights for four manses that already belonged to the monastery, they gave the monastery two of their own. They would then be allowed to use all six manses for two generations (until the daughters died). In exchange, Rambert

owed the monastery twelve *denarii* a year.

Despite the fact that Lantbert was a smallholder of indeterminate status and Rambert was a noble controlling six times as much land (and for a longer time), both parties paid two *denarii* a year for each manse. The monks loosely applied this basic rate to other precarial agreements as well. In 965 a noble named Harduicus gave the monastery one manse with a *curtis bona* and nine members of its *familia*. For this donation, he received usufruct rights to not only the donated manse, but also four of the monasteries' manses in the same location. For lifetime use of the five manses, Harduicus made an annual precarial payment of twelve *denarii*.¹³¹

In 947, a man named Everardus donated six manses to the monastery. These lands were in Resteigne and included a *silva*, a mill, and twenty-five unfree people who are all named in the charter. In return for the donation of this property, the monks gave Everardus the rights to use twelve of their own manses in the villa of Hillei, also located in Resteigne.¹³² The monastic villa included a church, a mill, and control of the fifty people belonging to the property (although only forty-six are named). Eventually, all eighteen manses would revert to the monastery, but for their lifetimes, Everardus and his two sons could use them for an annual precarial payment of three *solidi* (thirty-six *denarii*), which once again assigns a value of two *denarii* per manse for their lifetimes.

Because of the consistency of the tenth-century payments, it is tempting to assume that the monasteries were valuing all manses, regardless of size or quality, as worth a payment of about two *denarii*. But other agreements show that these values and payments could shift based on multiple factors. The similarities in the tenth-century agreements have also led some scholars to try to determine if a formulary was used by the monks in the tenth century. But Heinz Zatschek argued that the chances are slim, adding that these similarities could instead reflect the direction or conceptualization of a single person, perhaps Abbot Werenfrid. He viewed Werenfrid's potential hyperinvolvement in the production of these agreements as a comparable precedent to Wibald's active composition of charters.¹³³ The possibility of an individual leader leaving a "fingerprint" on documents or attempting to implement a change to the standardization of land values adds a wrinkle to the accepted notion that monasteries had long-term "corporate" visions.

And indeed, later precarial payments show a greater flexibility of contract terms, recognizing differences in status, value, and relationships that the apparent uniformity of the tenth-century agreements masks. In one case, the exceptional circumstances of the participants appear to have influenced the annual payment. In 1030, a man named Arnulf was preparing to go to war, and he and his wife decided to establish a type of precarial agreement with the monastery. This agreement differed from the others, because there was no end to the term established; instead the monks would collect a payment for an unspecified number of generations. In this case, the

land donated was only one manse, but the annual payment was to be 10 *denarii*.¹³⁴

An 1128 agreement between the monks and a man of free birth, Rollandus de Doroit, involved lands from nine properties. These lands, and twenty associated slaves, had a precarial value of seven *denarii dionensis monete* (or the money of account of Dinant).¹³⁵ This introduces another of the problems any centralizing authority faced in the early and central Middle Ages: a multiplicity of monetary units (alongside the diversity of land measures!). The precarial payments and taxes and tithes owed to Stavelot were recorded in monetary units that included *denarii*, *solidi*, *sol. denarii*, *libras denariorum coloniensium*, *denarii dionensis monete*, and *solidi leodiensium denariorum*. This variation in monetary units reflects the proliferation of numerous local mints and units of account during the Carolingian era, a practice that continued into the twelfth century.¹³⁶

A twelfth-century donation adds further uncertainty for modern scholars, and reminds us that, in the range of ways monks and their dependents valued their properties, monetary worth might not have been that important. A noble woman, Berta de Bullun, gave the monastery two servants and the two manses they held from her in the villa of Braz, including woodlands. In a statement that echoes Louis the Pious's uncertainty about the boundaries of Stavelot's properties, this document reports that the two manses were worth "more or less" ten *solidi*.¹³⁷

Another way to try to access the comparative value of monastic forests and other holdings is to look at financial and agricultural yields and the tax values of the properties. Yet very few of Stavelot's records provide tax information; though some record the ownership and dispersal of tithes, most do not provide any specifics of incomes. Some sense of annual values or yields from monastic property can be gathered from the charters, but, as with the precarial agreements, this was not recorded systematically and fluctuations in time, size of property, extent of monastic control, and productivity could all influence the stated value for a given estate. Even though by the late 900s the monks and their donors and dependents were clearly occasionally placing a monetary value on land, labor, and yields, this was not always the case. Because of such changeable factors as the geographic or strategic location of properties, the social rank of participants, the importance of the transaction to the monastery in the long run, and other factors at the particular moment of exchange, value was widely variable.

Price values could also reflect the relative importance of a particular transaction or resource at a specific moment in time. This is seen in a financial transaction from 1085 between Rodulf, the abbot of Stavelot, and a man named Mazo. Rodulf apparently had an unexpected need for one cartload of wine, and bought the cart and draft horses from Mazo. The cart, wine, and horses together had a nominal value of six *marci*. However, Rodulf

did not pay Mazo the money. Instead he placed the entire *curtis* of Sprimont and all of its possessions (except for the tithes, which Rodulf kept control of) as a surety on his eventual payment of either the full amount or the return of the horse and cart and reimbursement for the wine.¹³⁸ In this case, there is no reason at all to suppose that the *curtis* was worth only six *marci*. This was not an even exchange; Rodulf used a much more valuable piece of property as leverage to enlist Mazo's support. This is an extreme example, but the idea that Sprimont could be contextually rather than absolutely valued gets at the heart of the problem. Because there are so few surviving records of property value, tax income, tithes, and so on for Stavelot's estates, all values, even those that seem as if they can be directly compared, must be addressed as contextually determined, qualified, and mutable.

The mutability of land values can be seen in agreements in which the same property is valued at markedly different levels. In an agreement with a man named Ebroinus, the monks of Stavelot established a shifting precarial price for a single property.¹³⁹ Ebroinus gave the church at Stavelot one manse and a field. Under the terms of the agreement, the precarial value of the land during Ebroinus's lifetime was three *solidi* a year. However, after the death of Ebroinus, the payment would increase. His heirs would continue to hold the land, but would be required to pay five *solidi*. Although it could be argued that this reflects an anticipated rise in value, it is much more probable that Ebroinus's lower rate is to reward his actions as the original donor of the land to the monastery, especially since the charter reports that the "extra" two *solidi* were to be brought by the heirs not at the same time as the main payment, but on the anniversary of Ebroinus's death (perhaps, as with other examples, to be used to buy memorial candles).

A similar fluctuating precarial value was established between the monks and a man named Boso. In 1118, he and his wife Heluidis gave the monastery of Stavelot their allod in Tauernov and its *familia*, noting that the money from the property should be used to build an altar in the monastery's tower where the family would be buried. Like Ebroinus, they were interested in preserving their memory after death, but would still enjoy the use of the property during their lifetime. The couple would make a precarial payment of five *solidi* (sixty *denarii*) each year. However, once one spouse died, the terms would change, and the surviving spouse would pay thirty *denarii* per year. This shows that precarial value could also be based on the abilities of the donors/precarial holders to make payments.

As if this were not complicated and variable enough, the terms would once again shift upon the death of the second spouse. Unlike Ebroinus's heirs, the heirs of Boso and Heluidis would have no rights to the land, and "no ground to make any rebellion" against the monks. Instead of handing over the precarial agreement in full to their heirs, the couple instead established a long-term tax on the property's *familia*. Each member of the *familia* would pay one *denarius* per year. Although the size of the *familia* is

unrecorded, there were obviously many people residing on the property, because at least eight *solidi* (seventy-two *denarii*) of the tax was intended to pay for candles and a daily mass in the couple's memory, yet another reminder of the religious meanings of property donations.¹⁴⁰

Commemoration of the dead was a monastic power and privilege, but not one that was theirs alone. Families donated lands and monies, and were rewarded with spiritual and "neighborly" relationships with the monks. But such precarial and commemorative practices were central to the identity formation of noble families. "Land," wrote Geary, "kept memory alive."¹⁴¹ Families could use these grants (precarial and otherwise) to establish intergenerational relationships within their own families, and to consolidate and control their own scattered properties. For example, a family at Cluny made many small donations "bit by bit to build incrementally a family association with Saint Peter and his monks."¹⁴²

Precarial values can potentially provide information about the relative wealth of donors or the importance to the monks of receiving a certain property. Incentives to form a precarial relationship with the monks could be given in the form of a low annual payment. But because they are symbolic of relationships rather than commerce, such agreements do not reflect an absolute value in terms of a cash-based land market at Stavelot during the early and central Middle Ages.

A series of exchanges allegedly directed in part by Abbot Poppo shows that in spite of the many problems in assessing property values, the monasteries viewed certain properties as of greater worth than others. Although some aspects of these charters (primarily participants, dates, and other diplomatic details) are in doubt because they have been determined to be forgeries, their contents nonetheless suggest that the monasteries valued properties both relatively, in terms of the worth of controlling a certain property or being in a particular relationship, and absolutely, through measurements and other means of evaluation.¹⁴³

According to these documents, an imperial decision concerning the control of the villa of Hanweiler triggered a complex series of property exchanges. Hanweiler was being held by the monks of St. Maximin at Trier, but Emperor Conrad decided to give it instead to the church at Mayence in Hesse. As compensation, he restored to St. Maximin's the villa of Corswarem, which had twenty manses, including woodlands.¹⁴⁴ Though the emperor appears to have viewed these properties as equal, the monks who later reported the transaction did not.

In fact, Abbot Johannes of St. Maximin did not want Corswarem, because he believed it had been alienated from the monastery for too long. The villa's value to the monks was decreased because it would be too difficult for them to renew their claims to it. This problem was exacerbated by the fact that it was located quite some distance from Trier. It was instead much closer to Stavelot, and so Johannes approached Poppo and requested an exchange.

Poppo agreed in principle, and offered Johannes Malmedy's villa of Asselborn, which was in fact closer to Trier. However, the charters again show a comparative value analysis. Asselborn was purportedly of greater value, and Johannes was required to add more properties to his side of the exchange. In addition to Corswarem, Johannes also gave over his personal property at Wendenges, a half of a manse at Riumagus, and five portions of a vineyard and one and a half manses located above the Mosel.¹⁴⁵

No monetary values were recorded in any part of this series of exchanges. Both properties were agricultural estates with similar holdings. Nevertheless, they were not viewed (whether by the participants or by the forgers of the charters is unclear) as being of equal worth or value. This strongly supports the idea that the monetary values recorded in other documents were not equivalent to land or property values, as monetary values do not appear to have been deemed necessary to understanding, recording, or comparing the practical values of properties. Abbots and other leaders nonetheless had clear means by which they could assess the relative values of properties, and acted on those comparative valuations, adapting exchanges, sales, and other agreements to reflect those assessments.

The means by which the monks of Stavelot assessed and recorded the values of properties are no longer recoverable, but the ramifications of medieval valuation strategies are clear from such charters of exchange and donation. These documents were all part of a complex and shifting economy of exchange, power, strategic positioning, and estate administration that does not appear to have readily assigned fixed markers of value to individual properties. But monastic estates clearly had both tangible and intangible value; they provided the monasteries with their economic stability and they connected the monks to the social networks of the surrounding communities. As Barbara Rosenwein's work with Cluny's richer administrative record has demonstrated, by administering, exchanging, and taxing the lands of their neighbors, monks created economic and social bonds with the community, in turn enhancing and maintaining religious ties.¹⁴⁶

Woodlands as *Locus Amoenus*: The Spiritual Value of Domesticated Woodlands

The monks of the Ardennes knew and understood their landscape. It was, on a daily and seasonal basis, filled with farmers tending crops, shepherds and swineherds guarding animals in pastures and in the woods, laborers harvesting grapes in vineyards, workers cutting timber and managing coppice, and villagers harvesting the forest for its many other resources. It was in the monks' long-term interest to support, protect, and manage this

productive landscape, to know and understand its capacities and limits, and to help ensure the economic and agricultural viability of their properties. This in turn influenced how the monks perceived, described, and understood the natural world and the ways that people and God worked within it.

This landscape had true (if not now measurable) economic value, and its use and domestication was essential to support the lives and livelihoods of the monks and their neighbors. Of course the monks invested in agricultural improvements because it was in their economic interests to do so. But now I would like to turn to a less immediate but arguably more important element in this equation. The monks also made improvements to the landscape, domesticated the wilderness, and protected pastoral spaces because such actions had religious meaning.

As the descriptive passages in the last chapter suggest, the monks could view their landscape as green, lush, and thriving; it nourished their bodies and their souls, providing resources, peace, beauty, and tranquility. The *vita Remacii* describes the site of Malmedy as abundant in fish and surrounded by fertile pasture land for animals. The *Passio Agilolfi* notes that the villa of Amblève, “named after the river,” provided “many accommodations and amenities, especially an abundance of grass,” and “in these respects the appearance of the place was pleasing.”¹⁴⁷

Medieval authors recognized the rich symbolic, literary, and religious value of a Christian landscape associated with abundance, paradise, and the classical *locus amoenus*. Invoking biblical themes of providence and echoing the literary and imperial legacy of Rome, such descriptions had particular appeal to monastic communities. Citing classical predecessors, Isidore of Seville wrote that *loca amoena* are associated with good things, as they “promote love (*amor*) only and draw to themselves things that ought to be loved.” He located the linguistic roots of *loca amoena* in terms linked to either love or a lack of public function and commerce. Though he does not dispute these classical associations, the context in which Isidore set the entry suggests that despite these connections, he associated such places not with abstract ideas, but with physical features. His discussion of the term is found in book 14.8, which also includes entries for woods (*saltus*), groves (*lucus*), wildernesses (*desertum*), remote places (*devium*), sunny spots, and shady places.¹⁴⁸

Looking more closely at his descriptions of associated terms, there is an implication of a contrasting world of light and shadow, in which a *locus amoenus* might very well be found inside the “vast, wooded areas, where trees rise high.” Isidore links the *loca amoena* by proximity to: “34. ‘Sunny spots’ (*apricum*) are places which enjoy the sun, as if [they were] ‘without cold’; or else because they are open to the sky (*apertus caelo*). 35. By contrast, shady (*opacus*) places are the opposite of sunny spots, as if the word were *opertum caelum* (‘hidden sky’).... 37. ‘Summer pastures’ (*aestiva*) are shady places in which cattle avoid the heat of the sun in summer

(*aestas*).¹⁴⁹ Such features as warmth and sunshine alongside their opposites—shady spots that protect a bucolic world from excessive heat—would continue to recur in medieval descriptions of a bountiful nature.

The classical *locus amoenus* endured in medieval literature and imaginations. In his prewar survey of “the development of an appreciation for nature,” R. Hennig gave a surprisingly prominent role to long-term continuity. In describing the *locus amoenus*, he wrote that it “can be viewed as the primary motif of all nature representations from ancient literature up until the 16th century.”¹⁵⁰ More recently, Derek Pearsall and Elizabeth Salter also discussed the continuity of such images from classical poetry, but relied on vernacular and secular literary works.¹⁵¹ John Howe’s essay on medieval sacred space shifts the focus on the *locus amoenus* away from a secular or Romance setting toward a monastic and religious context, and his notes provide an overview of the literature since the 1950s.¹⁵²

One example from Howe’s work stands out as a model of how monastic foundation—the literary space *par excellence* for the representation of the desert as wilderness—could also be subsumed into a monastic view of nature that built on the *locus amoenus*. His translation of a passage from the eighth-century *Vita Philiberti* is worth quoting in length:

Jumieges is properly named Gemmeticum because it shines with diverse ornament in the manner of gems. Here is the forest foliage of leafy branches, here the many fruits of trees; on that side the most fertile earth is pleasing, there is meadow grass with its blades. Here are the sweet-smelling flowers of the gardens; there abounds the clustered fruit of the grapevines, which in brimming goblets gives a reddish glow to Falernian wine. Girded everywhere with waters, the splendid field is pleasing, suitable for the pasturage of pigs, yielding milk-bearing flocks, apt for different kinds of hunting, harmonious with the song of birds.¹⁵³

This description invokes much of the classical pastoral, including the reference to Falernian wine. This pastoral landscape (as was Fortunatus’s) is full of natural beauty and abundance and fertility, and represented as a space ideal for secular pursuits. In what is clearly an echo of classical literature rather than a suggestion for the new monks, Jumieges is described as “apt for different kinds of hunting.” In his analysis of the passage, Howe also points out the inclusion of the secular, noting how “the idyllic description of the monastery ... segues effortlessly from Paradise to pig farming.”¹⁵⁴

Several stories from the Ardennes similarly navigate the tension between paradise and human cultivation of the land. The *vita Popponis* tells a story about the time before Poppo became the abbot of Stavelot. In a phrase that echoes a donation charter, the *vita* reports that he was put in charge of an abbey at Wasloi, “with all of the appendices, and was allowed to do there

what he saw fit.” Though the tiny monastery was in bad shape, even described by the author as “worthless,” it was “located in a place that was very pleasing.” So Poppo rebuilt it “elegantly” and rechristened it, in effect founding it anew.¹⁵⁵

The monks understood the mutability of landscapes, and the ability of people to transform and improve on them. In part, this is a recognition of the fact that there were few, if any, parts of Ardennes that the monks and their neighbors did not already know and influence. This is an important part of the medieval and classical pastoral; the recognition of the role of people in both shaping and appreciating a beautiful and domesticated (or potentially domesticated) landscape. Virgil’s Tityrus was a shepherd, and classical poetry and art are full of idealized images of agricultural labor (divorced most likely from experienced agricultural labor) that are a large part of the idea of elite leisure that was also incorporated into the monastic worldview.

In his poem about the fortress that Bishop Nicetius of Trier built above the Mosel, Venantius Fortunatus praised human effort and industry. Nicetius “saw fit to enclose the wide fields by means of walls,” and “introduced sweet vines to the dull hills.” The river represents productive agriculture as it “is conducted through irrigating canals, seized here by the mill, from which it brings food to the populace.” Fortunatus described the fertility of nature and recognized the beauty of the landscape that people had influenced: “Far and wide, grafted young apple trees rise up and fill the place with many flowery smells.” He even personified the landscape to invoke the joys of nature: “The pleasant field (*amoenus ager*), covered with lush, green plants, smiles, and the gentle plains attract wandering souls.”¹⁵⁶ Expressing a similar delight in the beauty of the landscape, the author of the *Translatio Quirini* described a meadow that “offered fertile grasses and an eternally flowing stream.” The place, which he names as a “*locus amoenitas*,” became a site of healing for local residents.¹⁵⁷

Heriger also linked pastoral themes with salvation in his description of the naming of Stavelot. He claimed that the locals had named Stavelot (*Stabulaus*) after the wild animals that gathered there to graze and drink. He claims Remacle retained the local name, but decided to reattribute it because he wanted to turn the place into “a stable for faithful souls, by which they could hasten their way to the pasture of eternal life.”¹⁵⁸ The wild animals, so important to the idea of monastic isolation, could also thereby become part of a pastoral image. This picks up on an image from the *Vita Remaculi Prima* that also described “the pasture of heavenly life.”¹⁵⁹ This image is a medieval topos, but one that endures in Stavelot’s sources; centuries later, Wibald in turn invoked the “pasture of eternal life.”¹⁶⁰

In *Landscape and Memory*, Simon Schama noted that “one of our most powerful yearnings [is] the craving to find in nature a consolation for our mortality.”¹⁶¹ Monastic culture, ever with an eye to the afterlife, found many

ways to connect the cultivation of land to that of souls. The *Miracula Remacli* contains a story in which Louis the Pious charged Odo (d. 836), a reform abbot from Stavelot, with restoring the monastery of Dervo. Odo then worked at “expanding the cultivation” there.¹⁶² This phrase has two possible readings that support one another. This could very well refer to actual agricultural expansion, to the assarting of forest land to create arable land. As such, this could serve as a practical example of abbots managing properties as part of the larger connection between reform of monastic communities and reform of their physical environments. But, as Giles Constable points out, this was also a metaphor for spiritual reform tied into the idea of agriculture as proof of the successful cultivation of Christian messages.¹⁶³

Many sources from Stavelot-Malmedy link religiosity with concepts of cultivation and markers of fertility. Fertility was closely tied to agricultural and religious viability; fertile nature represented religious growth, and productivity in nature was a signifier of the spiritual success of a place or a person. The monasteries were a part of an abundant agricultural landscape, and seeds and fruit were used as metaphors for their spiritual produce. The *Vita Remacli Prima*, for example, reports that Remacle’s fame became known through all the provinces of Gaul, and even the highest ranking men noticed “what great and remarkable seeds the tree had produced.”¹⁶⁴

Of course, phrases such as “fruits of virtue” were common to Christian sources, and it is important to recognize that the monks of the Ardennes drew here from the well of Christian thought and writing. Yet the predominance of these natural symbols in their writings and imagination is clear, and when read in the context of the sources and alongside the ideas of wild and uncontrolled nature, they suggest that the authors were actively seeking to integrate their use of nature with their ideas about nature. The *vita Popponis* contains many such images. The first chapter, building on a biblical passage, states that Poppo meditated often on the scriptures “so that the seed of the word of God [sown] in the field of the heart not be suffocated by the thorns of vice, but that it may grow one hundredfold by means of *patientia*.”¹⁶⁵ This is clearly related to Christ’s parable of scattered seeds, which emphasizes the importance of good soil for the cultivation and increase of the good word. This image of spirituality tied to agricultural fertility also appears in a later setting; when describing Poppo’s gradual accumulation of greater responsibilities, the *vita* describes him as “one who, in his deeds has not lacked the fruit of eternal freshness.”¹⁶⁶ This message is tempered, however, by a reference to the importance of humility, for fertile fruits and seeds improperly stored can fester and ferment, and “a bad smell shall rise from him who glorifies his own deeds.”¹⁶⁷ Fertile ground alone did not automatically lead to spiritual success; as with the agricultural world, human effort and labor was also necessary.

The *Passio Agilolfi* also contains metaphors of agricultural fertility that is

not automatic, but must be won through human labor. The author imagines Agilolf giving a sermon to the citizens of Cologne, in which he warns against succumbing to fear and weakness. He reminds them that “the grain is transferred to the granary when, having been ground down in a thousand ways, it has no chaff. Let us be a rich harvest, not chaff that is scattered through the air by the blowing wind, if we wish to be brought to the heavenly granary.”¹⁶⁸ Here, a fertile harvest is directly linked with an agricultural heaven. Agilolf continued to draw out this agricultural metaphor. He consoled the people of Cologne (who had survived an attack on the city) and, drawing on the same parable used in the *vita Popponis*, he told them, “I scatter the seeds of divine word in your hearts,” adding that “if the thorns do not choke them and the heat does not scorch them, in the approaching rains of my encouragements and your good thoughts” they would grow, and just as “in the field through the rake both the soil is broken and the seed is covered you will germinate and bear the fruit of justice—at which the farmer may rejoice and be glad. Always take joy in God, again, I tell you, rejoice!”¹⁶⁹ This is not simply a casual reference to a biblical passage, but a clear and richly detailed set of images that obviously was of great importance to the writer.

It was not natural bounty alone, but also human intervention, nurture, and control that created religious success and fertility. Another passage from the *Passio* applies this theme of fertility directly to monastic spiritual life. “I warn you,” the saint advises the monks at Stavelot upon his arrival, “be chaste, gird up your loins against the fire of the heart.” Though the author has Agilolf point out that the monks should be chaste, the connections between fertility, seeds, and sexuality are striking. Lynda Coon discusses similar metaphors in earlier Christian writing, pointing out the links between seed metaphors and semen, and thus human fertility.¹⁷⁰ For monastic audiences, the fertility and seed metaphors were not necessarily to be interpreted as symbols for biological reproduction. This passage reminded monks although they might not be able to have children, they were not infertile. Finally, Agilolf concludes with a metaphor that links agricultural and religious fertility directly to the idea of the monastic control of a beautiful, domesticated nature: “All mankind is like a flower, they pass as quickly as the dew. Nor are we infertile trees, meet to be burned by fire; but in the house of the Lord we will be a *plantatio* (a stand of trees, deliberately planted), fertile and ornately flowering without end.”¹⁷¹ The author of the second biography of St. Hubert used similar metaphors of cultivation and agriculture to describe the early history of Andages: “Throwing the seeds of the good word on to good earth,” the “holy cultivators began to flow towards that place from all sides.”¹⁷² By linking the monks’ religious success to cultivation metaphors, the author tied religious purpose not to a “wilderness” but instead to the monastery’s success as an agricultural landlord.

In later centuries, Wibald's letters drew heavily on such uses of seeds, trees, and fruit to express the fecundity of Christian belief. A single one of these—the mustard seed—is worth a closer look. In the first use, the context is telling. Wibald wrote to a fellow abbot, Rupert, with a question about the loss of male virginity, asking whether virginity was lost through masturbation or any other means that causes the spilling of seed (*semen*) without intercourse.¹⁷³ Rupert's response includes several nature metaphors, including the idea of virginity as a flower. He also begins the letter with a modesty *topos*, writing that his knowledge of it was "no greater than a mustard seed," and so he was initially slow and lazy in his response. But, borrowing phrases almost verbatim from the Gospel of Matthew, Rupert added that "like a mustard grain, once [his response] grew, it became sweet-smelling and as great as a tree in which birds could shelter in the branches."

Many years later, in a letter to St. Agidius of Liège, Wibald used the same simile, drawing not only on Matthew, but also on Luke and the parable of the sown seed. As might be suspected, however, whereas Rupert had only slightly altered the biblical phrases, Wibald reworked them and wove them together, leaving his own stylistic signature. He wrote that if a mustard seed "fell on good ground, it would grow to be so large that the birds of the sky would be able to build nests in it as if in a tree."¹⁷⁴ Wibald's letters reinforce both the endurance of these pervasive metaphors and the myriad ways that medieval authors could draw on and then alter and expand these ideas to suit their own purposes or taste, making them both eternal and individual.

Fruit-bearing trees could be symbols of fertility and goodness, but the tree was a flexible metaphor, and could also be a sign of the lack of fertility or of inattention to religious issues. In several instances, Wibald used the idea of "trees with no fruit" as a sign of unnatural or pointless infertility or waste.¹⁷⁵ For example, in his 1137 farewell letter to the monks of Monte Cassino, he noted that, "in the field of God's cultivation ... a shady and fruitless tree has taken up the ground." This, as Jaffé points out, is an allusion to the parable of the fig tree from the Gospel of Luke. Wibald then drew from other biblical passages to reinforce his point. As with his interpretation of the mustard seed parable, here Wibald again molded and combined biblical images to suit his purposes. Fruitless trees, representing the religious decline of the area around Monte Cassino, should be destroyed. "An axe," he continued, "is positioned at the roots, so that the entire tree that does not produce fruit shall be felled."¹⁷⁶ He repeated this sentiment twenty years later in his last surviving letter. Urging Pope Adrian IV to act on a series of conflicts, Wibald wrote, "Indeed your holiness should not delay to cut off a bad thing at its roots."¹⁷⁷

Despite these occasional images of barrenness and infertility, metaphors of natural fertility and abundance dominate discussions of trees, fruit, and seeds. In his introductory letter to the *vita Remacii*, Notger presents his readers with an image of overabundant natural fertility. He includes two

aphorisms in his letter: “do not carry wood into the forest” and “do not add water to the river.”¹⁷⁸ These two statements express a confidence in the fundamental concept of boundless resources. Notger imagined the forest as the unfailing source of wood, never in need of restoration. He used these images of natural abundance to reflect the richness of the monastery’s libraries and diplomatic records. Notger was not alone in this. Wibald wrote to Emperor Lothar III about the destruction of the areas around Monte Cassino, which was so great that “The pen fails in the writing of it, and even if all of the wood in the forests and all of the plants in the fields, and all of the waters of the sea and all of the sands from the shore—even if all of them turned into words—they would not suffice to tell of it.”¹⁷⁹

Both Notger and Wibald used the rhetorical image of the unending supply of natural resources, particularly and primarily those of the forests and fields that surrounded them. Both passages invoke a sense of boundlessness, and both link this natural superabundance with words and writing. However, they both did so to different ends. Notger used them to represent the richness and superfluity of words and Wibald a fundamental failing of words. This shows another way in which these medieval authors were able to manipulate their concepts of the natural world in order to convey a multitude of messages.

Agricultural activity and resource management were sanctioned and supported by the intervention of the saints and the provision of abundance. Miracle collections frequently include stories of divine provision of natural abundance, reflecting biblical stories such as Christ’s miracle with the loaves and fishes, and Peter’s miraculous catch. Drawing on this tradition, and their own sense of the potential fertility and abundance of their local landscape, the monks of the Ardennes included stories of miraculous abundance in their hagiographical sources.

In the Ardennes most stories of natural abundance involve water resources. For example, when describing the foundation of Malmedy, the *vita Remacii* describes Remacle’s taming of a wild spring. Once Remacle intervened practically (by adding a lead pipe) and spiritually (by exorcizing the stream), the weak water flow was transformed, and water gushed out of the fountain, providing a constant and useful resource for the monks.¹⁸⁰ A story from the *Vita Hadalini* also describes a miraculous abundance of useful water. Hadalinus came upon a group of thirsty field workers whose friends had gone in search of water. They were delayed, and so the saint intervened, praying for their alleviation. In answer, a *fons largiflue* burst out of the ground, and, constantly bubbling up from the ground, sated the laborers’ thirst.¹⁸¹ Such images of an abundant (and even overabundant) natural world are also reminders of the power of the pastoral; many of these invocations of abundance are directly connected to a human presence and purpose, and to the agricultural world that the monks helped to shape.

As William North has pointed out, “property and piety, if not treated as

inherently antithetical, are often perceived by historians to be at best inversely proportional to one another: the greater the attention to property and, by implication, power, the less the active presence of ‘true piety.’”¹⁸² Yet monks used their religious authority and their control of religious message to support and supplement their temporal powers, and vice-versa. If animals (and nature) were, as Wibald pointed out, “created by God for human uses,”¹⁸³ then the monks could use religious stories to connect their more worldly identity as landholders directly to their spiritual goals.

Chapter 3

debates. They could also exercise a kind of selective memory—weeding out elements of the past that no longer served the present. Monastic memory, backed up by (occasionally falsified) written records, could be harsh and constrictive. But when turned to relationships, reconciliation, and individual people, it could also be forgiving and flexible.

By recording and preserving (theoretically unaltered) legal and administrative decisions through charters, polyptychs, and other documents, monks could lay claim to being a storehouse of preserved and “remembered” facts and data. However, the preservation of charters was by no means a dispassionate and faithful record of past events; it was laced with human decisions and goals.¹ The monks could also “remember” events through more clearly constructed sources. Miracle stories, biographies of founders, and chronicles all share with charters the goal of preserving for future generations the important events, decisions, and ideas of the house’s institutional and religious past.

It should not surprise us, then, that there was a blurring of legal and religious source genres. They were in dialogue with each other, and part of the same process of creating, preserving, and protecting both fiscal and religious identities. Because discord brought up so many fears and opportunities, looking at conflicts, their prevention, and their resolutions offers a way to explore how these source genres are connected to each other. This is particularly resonant in the case of Stavelot and Malmedy, since there are such clear and direct connections between periods of secular and religious unrest and the production of the houses’ rich narrative source base. The prime example of this (explored in more detail in [Chapter 4](#)) is the eleventh-century conflict between the houses that produced a wave of hagiographical sources. But changes of royal dynasty, shifts in episcopal policy, royally sponsored monastic reform, and administrative changes driven by local political alliances could all contribute to (and be seen reflected in) the production of religious and administrative records.

And Stavelot’s monks saw much less distinction between those source categories than do modern scholars. Remacle’s seventh-century foundation of Stavelot and Malmedy was recorded in contemporary royal charters, an eighth-century *vita*, a tenth-century *vita*, and, finally, the twelfth-century altarpiece that Wibald commissioned. The Merovingian royal charters and several early papal charters remained a living part of the houses’ later identity, in part because the monks preserved them alongside religious narratives. An eleventh-century codex from Malmedy contains hagiographical writings about Remacle and then a series of copies of the early charters. In this context, these legal documents had become part of the religious history of the monasteries.² In turn, the religious narratives built on the wording and content of the charters and acknowledged their importance. Notger pointed out in his introduction to the *vita Remacii* that the monasteries’ library and records were excellent, and the *vita* draws on the

witness lists and other “legal” details in the charters when it describes the houses’ early conflicts.

Foundation-era conflicts could destroy any hopes that fledgling monasteries had of establishing a successful and thriving community. Yet if dealt with and settled successfully, these initial disputes and their resolution could become a part of both the corporate and religious history of the houses, and could shape future relationships with patrons and neighbors. The abbots of Stavelot-Malmedy and other Ardennes monasteries faced conflicts with local groups as soon as they founded their houses. They built connections between their religious and fiscal identities not only to encourage donation and explain their control over expanding territories, but also to quell conflicts over those properties.

Nonetheless, many people did challenge the monasteries’ property claims, and conflict plagued the houses from their foundations. The monks, their allies, and their enemies often engaged in protracted legal, physical, and religious struggles over forests and other natural resources. The monks’ social, religious, and cultural authority was threatened by conflicts and solidified through the active process of dispute resolution and the monastic power to preserve memory.³

Conflicts were tied in with local history and economies, and thus though broad patterns can be discerned in monastic attitudes, it is also worth studying the ways that individual houses responded to and remembered conflict. This was modeled in a comparative article, which demonstrated that monastic communities across Northern Europe had access to an incredible range of options to settle disputes. This “vast arsenal” of methods included “cursing, negotiating, compromising, appealing to political and supernatural powers, seeking mediators, [and] performing rituals.”⁴ The authors demonstrated effectively that individual monasteries differed from each other in their approach to disputes. It is important to understand both how the monks of Stavelot shared responses to conflict and dispute resolution strategies with other monks (and secular powers) and how they differed from them, with unique experiences that shaped their house’s individual history and culture.

Monastic Foundations: Protection, Reconciliation, and Avoiding Conflict

Many of the Ardennes monasteries faced local resistance when they were initially founded, since they were not, after all, established in deserts. Cugnion and Stavelot-Malmedy (founded by Remacle) and Chelles (founded by his disciple, Hadalinus) all faced conflicts and tensions surrounding their attempts to found their monastic communities within an already inhabited

landscape. Yet all three communities had different responses in the face of similar threats.

Cugnon (Remacle's first attempt at founding a monastery) left little record of its failed foundation. Though later it would be remembered as an isolated foundation, the monastery was in fact imposed onto a political landscape that had already been divided among other groups. Many people had interest in the area near Cugnon, and thus, when Sigibert III carved out properties for the house, thereby redistributing authority and power, the participation and cooperation of those other groups was necessary. Sigibert issued the grant only "after consulting with the *magnificorum apostolicorum* Chunebert, Memorianus, and Godo and his *inlustrium virorum* Grimoald, Bobo, and Adalgisil."⁵ No other charters from Cugnon survive. It is likely they fell victim to the processes of creative historical destruction and "construction" described in recent works on medieval memory and archives.⁶ Rather than remembering this period of possibility and conflict via normative records, the monks chose to relegate Cugnon to religious memory. To learn what happened to the house, we have to turn to Heriger's tenth-century *Vita Remacii*.

The monasteries fit a broader pattern, in which the editing of "archival memory" over the course of the ninth century "determined what access to the past would be available to future generations."⁷ This meant that around the year 1000, Heriger's account was informed both by surviving archival evidence and by its absence—he had to rely on the history that the monks chose to remember and preserve. According to his account, even though it was royally sponsored and supported, Cugnon failed because several local powers viewed the monks as unwelcomed usurpers of the local economy.⁸ This led to conflict, and is remembered because of what its failure taught Remacle about conflict prevention and resolution.

And so, according to Heriger, Remacle approached the king directly and told him that his earlier royal decrees of land grants and protections had failed. He asked permission to flee the conflict at Cugnon and move his attempt at founding a monastery to another location. Both Sigibert and Grimoald (perhaps not wanting to continue to show weakened authority in the region) agreed to the move.⁹ This led to Remacle's foundation of Stavelot and Malmedy and a new batch of conflicts with local powers.

At Cugnon, when royal authority failed to protect the monks, Remacle avoided conflict by abandoning the contested site. When the monks of Stavelot faced similar problems, however, they tried a different tactic: concessions. By the time that Stavelot-Malmedy was founded around 648, the experience at Cugnon meant that both Remacle and his royal patron knew that local antagonism could lead to the failure of such foundations. Sigibert granted him the large area of forested land that became the core of the monastic properties. But, as with Cugnon, the agency of all of this is blurred because Heriger was drawing from both charters and from religious

legend.

Sigibert's charter for Stavelot (HR 2) shows the involvement of many people in this renewed foundation. Remacle, Sigibert, and Grimoald all appear as major players, working together to shelter the houses from conflict. The charter also suggests that the foundation of Stavelot-Malmedy was in many ways an extension of the earlier effort at Cugnon; several of the witnesses and supporters of the act were also on hand when Cugnon was issued its charter, including two labeled in Cugnon's charter as "illustrious men."¹⁰ These signatories suggest both the social importance of foundation charters and that the problems at Cugnon were still on the participants' minds.

The initial grant of lands and rights to Stavelot-Malmedy was intended to serve as a buffer against the outside world, so that the monks could live in solitude, avoiding women, other neighbors, and the "tumult of the age."¹¹ However, within the first twenty years of the monasteries' foundation, this initial grant was already untenable. In 670, King Childeric II intervened, reducing the boundary from twelve to six leagues. He renewed his protection of the houses, but "with the condition, just as those servants of God had requested," that several properties be withdrawn and the size of the grant reduced.¹²

The underlying reasons for the reduction of Stavelot's properties (apparently initiated by Remacle and the monks) cannot be firmly determined. Though it is most likely that as at Cugnon conflict with local landholders was at the root of the request, several scholars working with these charters do not agree. Robert Christophe argues that no conflict was involved at all, claiming instead that the first grant reflected potential monastic growth, and that the reduction was enacted because the monasteries had not grown as quickly or extensively as had been initially imagined.¹³ But an evaluation of monastic expansion within the first decades of foundation seems too tight a time frame, whereas this was plenty of time for the monks to recognize serious local conflicts. Chris Wickham in turn doubts the charter's claim that the monks themselves sought the size reduction, arguing instead that it was Childeric who wanted to reduce the risk to the royal fisc: "it looks as if the 648 gift had been a little hastily generous, and that a strict reading of the text threatened well-established royal properties that the kings by no means wished to cede away."¹⁴

However it is equally likely that the decision was based on a desire by either the king or the monks to reduce actual and potential conflicts over the extent of these woods. By reducing the size of the area under the most extreme monastic protection, the monks created a second area between the core monastic holdings and the principle holdings of secular neighbors in which they might share rights and privileges with others, thus hopefully preventing some of the most extreme local conflicts. Proof that this was a reduction in degree of control rather than a loss of all claims might lie in one

of the lands that was eliminated from the protected zone in 670: the *curtis* of Amblève. The monks continued to have an active interest in this property well into the eleventh century, even though it lay outside the official bounds of immunity. Such boundaries were not necessarily absolute; instead they could be starting points for negotiations of relationships. This idea of varying concentric zones of power and protection is reinforced by a much later example from Cluny that “is best interpreted not as the conclusion of a dispute but rather as one of a number of striking public moments in a set of negotiations ... over churches, land, and power.”¹⁵

The emphasis in Childeric’s charter on Stavelot’s voluntary and deliberate reduction of the *forestis*, even if a diplomatic fiction, was retained centuries later when the smaller boundary was confirmed by Louis the Pious in 814. Once again, the charter claims that the monks instigated the royal action: “the aforementioned [abbot, Wirund], along with his community, has earnestly asked that we again, *for stability’s sake*, grant and confirm the aforementioned *forestis* through the places named and described above.”¹⁶ Regardless of the purpose of the seventh-century reduction, in 814 both Louis the Pious and the monks appear to have agreed with it.

Another indication that actual conflicts lay behind Stavelot’s shifting boundaries is the fact that over the course of this reduction, royal warnings about conflict not only endured, but were expanded. In 648, Sigibert noted that “at no time shall any person disturb their life in that forest (*forestis*).”¹⁷ In 670 Childeric repeated Sigibert’s warning, and added that the monks should have full immunity and enjoy peace, “without any attacks from foresters (*forestarii*) or any other persons.”¹⁸ In 814, Louis expanded the Merovingian warning against the violation of monastic properties, forbidding any of his *fidei* to attack, diminish, or invade the forest in any way.¹⁹ These men should “instead allow the monks serving God in that little monastery to use the property for supplying their own basic needs, and to hold the same property completely, and for all times, free of any infestation or repercussions or diminutions.”²⁰ He also extended the warning to protect all monastic interests, perhaps further suggesting that Wirund’s eagerness to have the new emperor confirm his monastery’s holdings was in part due to the threat of outside conflict. He ordered that no one “shall dare to contest or take away or lessen anything from the tithes and chapels of this celebrated community, nor be tempted to occasion any opposition or attack on them.”²¹

The drastic reduction of the monasteries’ core properties had perhaps shrunk the area of the most extreme protective rights, but it had not stopped the monks from expanding the geographic scope of their holdings. This reduction instead narrowed the extent of the area of exemption, in an attempt to minimize the most extreme conflicts over the forested landscape surrounding the houses. Rosenwein has discussed similar dynamics at work in the grants of immunity given to other houses. She has noted that it is important to remember that the granting of immunity was not a sign of

royal weakness: “More important for the early Middle Ages, does not the very expression of restraint announce the power of the king? This power is of three sorts: first, it is a declaration of self-control; second, it is an affirmation of royal control over public agents and their jurisdiction; third, it is an announcement of control over the configuration of space.”²² Immunities established new patterns of land use, new relationships, and, in the case of monastic foundations, inserted new people into preexisting economic and social relationships. In the case of Stavelot-Malmedy, time appears to have shown that conceding some of their new power and shrinking the “footprint” of their immunity was a path to successfully coexisting with neighbors.

Many monasteries faced such conflicts stemming from their foundation, and the early history of the monastery of Chelles, also in the Ardennes, provides an example of a different response to secular conflict. Chelles was closely connected to Stavelot: it was also in the diocese of Liège, it was founded by Remacle’s disciple St. Hadalinus, and Hadalinus’s *vita*, like that of Remacle, was written by Heriger of Lobbes. Like the monks of Stavelot, the monks of Chelles faced potential conflict soon after their foundation. However, their response was different and is a reminder that monks were also in a position to invoke the authority of the saints to establish power and security and to protect their landed interests.

Heriger’s *vita Hadalini* includes a miracle story involving the forested land immediately surrounding the newly established monastery.²³ The events of the miracle story involved two horsemen (*equites*), who were hunting with their horses and dogs. Ignorant of the expansion of Hadalinus’s monastery, the hunting party chanced upon the little valley in which the new monastery was nestled. Unaware that they had violated a monastic space, the horsemen stayed in the valley overnight. When they woke in the morning, their horses and dogs were dead.

The death of the animals that represented secular authority and culture demonstrated that this was a protected space. The two *equites* were punished for their trespass into the ecclesiastical landscape; by extension this represented all secular trespasses onto monastic properties. Local church authorities interpreted this as a sign of the sanctity of the area surrounding the monastery and used the symbolic deaths as an excuse to ban all horsemen from crossing the oratory’s boundaries.

This story was recorded several centuries after the foundation of Chelles, and demonstrates how the memorializing power of hagiography provided a way to perpetuate boundaries and legitimize monastic authority in the face of secular competition. Official boundaries, grants of immunity, and miraculous protection of monastic grounds were all ways that monastic communities could stake territorial claims. They were also all tools that could prevent and resolve conflicts over the politics of foundational moments, which as Cugnon shows, could be perilous. Whereas the monks of

Stavelot used (albeit partially unsuccessfully) legal channels, those of Chelles used stories, symbolism, and rhetoric; both methods were attempts to carve from forested surroundings a protected zone that served as a buffer between the monks and their neighbors, forestalling conflict.

Remembering and Resolving Conflict

When he wrote about the miraculous deaths of the hunting animals at Chelles, Heriger added his guess that the events took place at a villa controlled by the monastery known as Mons Francheri. But then he hedged, expressing doubt about the location because he believed that “memory is now interrupted” at the place where the miracle happened.²⁴ Written at a time of increasing millennial fears and social upheaval, this statement is, of course, part of the broader rhetoric of hagiography intended to recall what has almost been forgotten, and to preserve holy deeds from the powers of oblivion. However, it is an interesting statement, given the legal and territorial ramifications of the miracle; could this “recovered memory” reflect renewed efforts to reclaim Chelles’ properties? Or is it a way of suggesting that the ban has superseded the events that led to it? Had the boundaries become so “real” through other channels that miracle was no longer the dominant dialogue of power and authority over the landscape?

Memory and history were preserved through multiple sources and by many different people, for many different reasons. Things were remembered, and forgotten, through charters, cartularies, *gestae*, *vitae*, passions, and miracle collections, and stories dance back and forth across those genres and across centuries. Miracle collections borrowed the diplomatic format of charters to add a sense of authority and temporal context. For example, the hailstorm miracle story from the second collection (late eleventh century) of St. Hubert’s miracles begins with a phrase that both places it firmly in the past and clearly borrows from the legalistic style of charters. The opening phrases note that the storm occurred “in the 837th year from the incarnation of the word, when Louis the Pious was in the twenty-fifth year of his reign, and Walcaud, the bishop of Liège, had served for 28 years.” This can be compared to a *datum* clause from one of Stavelot’s charters, signed on 25 May 827: “Given on the 8th day before the Kalends of June, Christ protecting, in the 14th year of the reign of lord Louis, and the 5th year of the reign of Lothar, most pious *augusti*, in the 5th year of the Indiction.”²⁵

Just as religious stories could incorporate legal language to add authority or historicity, charters also reflected the language of religious sources in order to add a sense of sanctity. Many of Stavelot’s charters take care to note the saint’s presence at Stavelot, and to acknowledge the spiritual benefits of supporting the monastery. Louis the Pious did both in his 814 confirmation of the monasteries’ lands. In his *narratio* to the main act, he briefly explained

Remacle's founding of the house, and then noted that the saint was "now resting in that monastery." He also pointed out that he had decided to renew the donation, "for the sake of seeking stability and for the advantage of our soul."²⁶

But perhaps the best example of how charters could incorporate religious ideals into the "official" record of conflicts lies in the ways that monastic authors converted the traditional penalty clause (or *sanctio*) into religious threats. Charters frequently conclude with not only a prohibition clause, banning violation of the agreement, but also a description of the legal or financial punishments that would accrue if the terms were violated. These penalties added judicial and legal authority, reinforcing the rights and privileges of the granter of the document. Monastic charters invoke religious authority by adding in religious sanctions, blurring the line between legal and spiritual decree. For example, in January 755, a man named Odilbert gave the monasteries a vineyard as part of his will; the formal charter concludes with the clause that if any of his heirs were tempted to reverse or nullify this, "they shall, first and foremost, incur the wrath of omnipotent God, and moreover, by compulsion of the fisc, hand over 3 *uncia* of gold and 5 *pondera* of silver."²⁷

Such curse clauses also lay on the intersection between remembering and forgetting. The clauses threaten to remember and punish earthly crimes for eternity, yet also offer the promise of forgiveness if behaviors are reformed—what Lester Little calls an "escape clause."²⁸ This is because, he points out, "no matter how terrible excommunication could seem, it always left open the possibility of repentance, forgiveness, and reintegration."²⁹ A tantalizingly vague charter from Stavelot demonstrates just this kind of escape, as it establishes the conditions upon which two men were released from a previous sentence of excommunication. Though the conditions of peace suggest that the men had engaged in acts of violence or theft of monastic properties including a fishery (perhaps connected to the estate at Longia, since the same men had been signatories for the charter that redefined its rights, and the penalty clause for that charter included anathema), no specific details of the past bad acts are recorded, and the implication is that through this document of reconciliation, the slate has been, in part, wiped clean.³⁰

Reconciliation was an attractive goal for the monks in part because they faced such frequent (and often long-lasting) conflict with their neighbors. There appears to have been no single period without at least some local conflicts, and many of these stretched across generations. One example of this involves the property of Germigny, one of Stavelot's oldest holdings. The property was characteristic of the mixed-use landscape of some of the better-settled areas in the Ardennes. As noted already, it included woodlands, pastures, vineyards, and multiple mills.³¹ It also had a history of simmering conflict, which had a drastic resolution. In October 1104, Rigoldus

of Alsunza formally restored Germigny to Stavelot, after acknowledging that his ancestors had falsely and violently seized the property from the saint, and had held it for generations, passing it down as hereditary land.³²

Although any earlier records of attempts to reclaim Germigny have not survived, the monks placed great value on it and its woodlands. In addition to the return of the villa and the financial settlement, the monks exacted a surety of 51 *marcas* from Rigoldus. The monks also used the social authority of numerous regional figures who appear as witnesses to the agreement as a guarantee of Rigoldus's continued cooperation. By having witnesses to the transaction and signatories to the charters, the monks engaged the local community in the property transactions, and hoped to forestall potential conflict over properties. Thirteen men witnessed the establishment of the surety, and the land restoration was witnessed by twelve lay men and ten men who represented the church, including a judge. The witnesses were from nearby places and there were several kin groups who participated. For example, the lay witnesses included Godefrid of Mézieres and his son Aured, and Lambert of Bulin and his nephew Frainels. Little is known about these men, but since their names suggest that they were from the area, their involvement in this process could have exerted considerable social pressure on Rigoldus.

Rigoldus would have also been very aware of not only his worldly neighbors, but also of the role of the monks, the saint, and the broader religious community. The charter was drawn up at Stavelot—not only because the monastic scribes were located there, but also because of the power of making permanent agreements within a sacral space. A signature to an agreement made not only in the presence of family, friends, and neighbors, but also in front of a saint certainly had tremendous binding power. To underscore this, Rigoldus agreed to come to Stavelot every year on the feast of St. Remacle to renew his gift and pledge his continued peaceful relations with the monastery in front of the abbot, the congregation, Stavelot's advocates, and other local nobles. If he were to fail in this, the monks threatened public damnation and excommunication.³³ Rigoldus appears to have returned the land only after the monks levied this threat of excommunication on him, leaving him in fear of his soul.³⁴

This form of religious coercion was, by the twelfth century, an increasingly common way for monks and clergy across Europe to assert temporal authority. Through both overt, immediate threats and potential sanctions clauses used as part of the reconciliatory process, monks exerted a large social pressure on their opponents. As Little has argued, such reconciliatory charters could serve as vehicles for creating new relationships. Rosenwein also suggested that many charters can be seen not as punishments or one-sided judgments, but as "positive acts of reconciliation."³⁵ She argued this is especially important for Cluny, where many conflicts were with local neighbors, and creating absolute enemies

from neighbors was not in monastic interests.

Finally, as a further statement of the power of monastic spiritual authority over worldly properties, Rigoldus's charter ends with an elaborate anathema clause. This curse clause takes up almost half of the document. The abbot levied excommunication against "anyone at all in the villa of Germigny who in the future unjustly and savagely engages in any unjust act or rapine or pillaging against us or against our church, and also anyone who gives them advice or instigation or assistance."³⁶ As is fitting for a conflict over a valuable property that had been unjustly seized and held, the curse includes many threats to the fertility of the violators' lands. The monks call for their land to be infertile, their harvests to fail, and their food and drink to be spoiled. They also wish on violators of the agreement that their families be similarly infertile:

Thus, namely, [we decree] this so that they may be cursed in their houses, cursed in the fields, cursed in all places in which they will stand and walk, sit or lie; may they be cursed in drinking, may their food and drink be cursed, may they be cursed sleeping and awake. May their work and the produce of their land be cursed, may their comings and goings be cursed; may they be cursed from the tops of their heads to the soles of their feet. May their wives become widows and be without children, let the Lord God strike them with poverty, hunger, fever, cold, heat and polluted air, and toothaches. Let Him strike them with madness and blindness and enraged minds. May they grope about at noon as if they were blind in the dark, may the Lord chase them down until they disappear from the earth. May the earth swallow them alive like Dathan and Abyron, and may they descend living into hell, so that they may be with Judas, the Lord's betrayer, and with Pilate and Herod and with all of the other malefactors who are in hell. Let all of this be done, let all of this be done unless they recover their senses and make satisfaction to God's Church.

In an appeal to Hartwig, the archbishop of Bremen, Wibald reminded him that there were two contracts established between Corvey and the archbishopric: one divine, the other human. Wibald acknowledged that human bonds could be dissolved or altered by legal means or by the intervention of men, but that the divine bonds were eternal, and thus more powerful.³⁷ The tension and connection between these categories of relationships allowed the monks to use their spiritual authority to ensure their continuing secular status. The inclusion of the extensive curse clause in Rigoldus's land agreement and the looming threat of anathema show how seriously monastic leaders took threats to their tenure of lands. Forests, fields, mills, and vineyards that were either neglected or illegally occupied

by local tenants were a very real problem. When their rights to property or their authority over the natural and political landscapes were challenged, the monks had at their disposal a remarkable variety of social, economic, and religious methods for enforcing their authority over local lands and populations.

Location and landscape figure prominently in conflicts not only as contested sites, but also as the sites of conflict resolution. This is seen in the ceremonies involving property transactions and in the processes and rituals established to prevent and then resolve conflicts. Though these ceremonies were based around intangible religious belief and social structures, they also took place in a deliberately chosen space, often with visible signs of monastic control over both properties and religious authority. Religious authority was closely associated with the location of the saints and the physical infrastructure of the monasteries. In both charters and miracle stories recording the end of a conflict, the church of Stavelot is the preeminent site of mediation and accord.

Many of the vows and the other rituals of tithing and exchange took place in front of one of Stavelot's many altars, further underscoring the religious underpinnings of these economic transactions. For example, in 958/59, Theutgerus and his wife, Uda, gave the monastery a "well-built" *curtis* in the villa of Aterino. The couple stipulated the income should be used to support the poor, and as proof of their donation, they went before "the altar of St. Peter in Stavelot where the body of the precious confessor Remacle is venerated." In 943, Reingildis gave her donation of six manses at Remacle's altar.³⁸ Similarly, Ernulfus and his father performed an act of donation in front of Stavelot's main altar, in the presence of not only the abbot and the monks, but also of the count, the monastery's advocate, and eight additional witnesses.³⁹

Just as they could draw on a wide array of witnesses and signatories to confirm land transactions and forestall potential conflict, the monks could also draw on a surprisingly broad array of saintly witnesses and protectors. In the Christmas season of 1030, Poppo dedicated three of the main church's altars, and the contents of the dedicatory inscriptions survive. These remind us that although Remacle was the principal protector of the monasteries and their properties, when donations were made, oaths given, or conflicts resolved in front of Stavelot's altars, a host of saints bore witness.

Donations made in front of the altar in the St. Nicholas chapel inside the church of Stavelot would have been done in the presence of relics of saints Nicholas, Martin, Medard, Vedast, Amand, Apri, Columbanus, Remigius, and Maximinus.⁴⁰ The altar of St. Mary in the crypt of Stavelot contained relics from the Sepulchre of the Lord, from the clothing of Christ, fragments of the cross (*de ligno Domini*), vestments of Mary, relics from the bodies of the apostles Peter, John, and Jacob (James the Lesser) and others, the clothing of St. Apollinaris, relics of St. Lambert, and the martyrs Pancratius, Ciryacus,

Gengulfus, George, and others.⁴¹ The altar of St. Martin included relics from saints Hilarius, Remigius, Nicholas, Maximin, Servatius, and Germain of Auxerre, and the altar of St. Benedict contained relics of Benedict, St. Gregory the Great, Sts. Vedast and Amand, Hadelinus, Monulph, and Basilius, and St. Maur.⁴² These saints included universal figures of import to the wider church (such as Peter and Gregory) as well as more regional figures (including Sts. Remigius, Hadalinus, and Amand). The moment in which a peasant, count, or noble woman went before these saintly witnesses and promised that they and their heirs would give up all rights to a property, never challenge the transaction, and “launch no rebellion”⁴³ against the monastery on pain of anathema and damnation would have been charged with spiritual meaning.

Donations and agreements made at altars were not only private contracts between individuals and the saints; they were also part of public, community rituals. In October 953, Abbot Werenfrid gave Count Warner land in the villa of Nohas, allegedly because he feared that the monasteries would not be able to defend it from unspecified enemies. In exchange for the land at Nohas, Warner gave Stavelot land from the villa of Baldav. Because this decision affected Malmedy as well as Stavelot (potentially exacerbating tenth-century tensions between the houses), Werenfrid also bestowed some manses with woodland on the monks of Malmedy. The transaction was witnessed by both religious and secular allies acting in the interests of both Count Warner and the monasteries. There were thirteen named witnesses “and many others,” and Werenfrid also had Bruno, the archbishop of Cologne, confirm the transaction.

When Warner officially handed over Baldav, “a good *curtis*, but greatly devastated by enemies, with good cultivated fields, a brewery and bakery, a mill, and a large woodlands,” he did so publicly at Stavelot’s church.⁴⁴ He laid a tree bough (*ramus*) and a clump of earth (*cespes*) on the altar. This is also an important reminder that land could be both an abstract concept and a tangible reality. As Gurevich wrote, “the specific quality of medieval symbolism is immediately connected with medieval ways of perceiving space. A plot of land lies within certain limits, but at the same time it can fit, as it were, into a piece of turf handed over in court from one owner to another.”⁴⁵ This highly visible and symbolic ritual, done in front of witnesses and in front of the saints, highlights how important nonwritten proof was for demonstrating control of territory, and of how closely tied tangible control of properties and resources was to the religious authority of the monasteries.

Monastic Conflict Narratives

The monks of Stavelot and Malmedy recognized that their forests and

woodlands were a source of wealth and power. These forests were also one of the monasteries' defining features, and were thus invaluable for preserving the monks' identity and spiritual authority. In their struggle to establish and maintain both temporal and spiritual control, the monks were involved in many conflicts over property, usufruct rights, and political power. Political and religious alliances and tensions exacerbated economic threats and forests, woodlands, and other parts of the agricultural landscape became sites of conflict. These conflicts reflect both the diversity of the landscape and the layers of authority and power that claimed and acted upon it.

These conflicts were multilayered, involving all strata of medieval society and multiple forms of resolution and amelioration. Theft of animals, neglect of property, and usurpation of forest and land-use rights led to many forms of conflict and as many solutions. The monks themselves were almost always the recorders of these conflicts, and they were able to present the outcomes in ways that augmented their own power over the landscapes that surrounded them. Often, resolutions involved miracle stories that asserted that the saints were directly involved with monastic conflict and had an interest in protecting not only the monks' souls, but also their property. The monks created and manipulated these stories to demonstrate that, in situations of conflict or abuse, the saints would intervene on behalf of the monasteries.

Monks could use conflict narratives to further their temporal interests as part of very specific attempts to define and control their landed properties. One example of this is a story told in the *Miracula Remacii* about a "depraved" and "vicious" man who seized land that belonged to the monastery.⁴⁶ The monks sent representatives to the property's boundaries, in effect becoming a visible symbol of an abstract claim of ownership. This attempt to humble the man failed, however, because he "boldly" came and met the monks at the borders of the disputed property, bringing witnesses who supported his claim. Arguing from hindsight and from an assumption of authority over knowledge, the monks claimed that the witnesses deliberately lied on their neighbor's behalf, testifying that the disputed land did not belong to the monastery. Faced with a community that was banding together to protect the interests of a local landholder against those of the monastery, they needed to reassert their control.

Faced with both local resistance and an apparent inability to dispute this claim with documentary proof, the monks of Stavelot manipulated the situation by invoking their ultimate source of authority: divine intervention. The monks appear to have insisted that the man take an oath in Remacle's name in order to prove his claim. He swore that if a hair was left on his head or in his beard, then he would be vindicated.⁴⁷ Within the hour, he was bald. The following night, he lost all of the hairs on his body and his finger- and toenails. With this miraculous proof of his perjury, the man not only

restored the land, but also gave the monastery an equivalent piece from his own property. The saint's power inscribed a lesson of monastic authority directly on the body of this opponent, and indeed, he remained hairless for the rest of his life. This fits a contemporary trend tied to the Peace of God movement and increased external threat on monastic communities. Thomas Head has pointed out that eleventh-century miracle collections "are full of chastisement miracles in which the patron saint punished enemies of his or her familia following such ritual manipulation of the saint's relics or communal prayer directed to the saint."⁴⁸

By recording this story about property conflict as part of the collection of miracles attributed to St. Remacle, the monks controlled its presentation and interpretation. The message is clear: the monastery would triumph even over deliberate attempts to deceive the monks or dispossess them of their landed wealth, because their sainted founder continued to protect after death the monastery that he had so clearly attempted to shelter from conflict during his life. Like the resolution of the long dispute over Germigny, the monks used their position as religious authorities to support and reinforce their economic authority within the region.

Even though such appeals to divine intervention were sometimes effective, a more traditional route for monasteries to assert rights to forest use was through legal channels such as the royal court. For example, in the ninth century, Audon, the abbot of Stavelot, requested that the emperors Louis the Pious and Lothar intervene in a long and bitter fight with Alberic, the administrator of the neighboring royal fisc of Tectis. This conflict was substantial and heated; the charter records that the "dispute was being waged so furiously" that the emperors intervened immediately.⁴⁹ The conflict over Tectis provides details about which forest and woodland rights could be disputed, showing the tensions that resulted from complex land use and mixed ownership.

The dispute concerned usufruct rights to the *silva* of Astanetum (probably Staneux, along the Amblève River), which both parties claimed.⁵⁰ These included the right to pasture pigs and other animals, to collect firewood and small timber, and to use the fisheries in the woods. Although the immediate trigger for Audon's complaint to Louis and Lothar is unknown, it is likely that tensions over the shared resource had built up over time, and some gross violation of rights by one of the parties sparked a renewal of open conflict. Perhaps the appeal to the emperors was a final resort chosen by the abbot, unable to come to an independent agreement with Alberic, who does not appear to have been present at the initiation of the investigation.

Unfortunately for the monks of Stavelot, their case actually weakened after investigation, and they were not able to assert their rights to the forest in full. Imperial investigation revealed that *both* the abbot and Alberic had valid claims to the woods that dated back several generations. The

investigators had inspected the woods and met with both parties, conducting interviews with residents and researching in the monastery's library. They found that the monastery had a claim to the woods "because of the precepts of donation issued by the earliest kings of the Franks." In fact, Louis himself had confirmed Stavelot's rights to the tithes and chapels of Tectis in a charter issued in 814. This is the earliest surviving mention of Tectis in Stavelot's records, but Louis's charter makes it evident that the monastery had enjoyed the same rights from earlier Carolingian or Merovingian kings.⁵¹

However, the investigators also found that Alberic and the *familia* of the fisc had a legitimate claim to use the woods "because of ancient custom."⁵² This conflict between written documents and the force of customary law and tradition was not fully resolved by the emperors, and was actually but one example of a Carolingian-era struggle to define the comparative value of written and oral evidence, and between human memory and documented evidence. In this case, the emperors determined that the precepts of their predecessors needed to be upheld, perhaps to ensure preservation of their own decrees by future leaders. However, they also ruled that tradition had apparently equal force, since they decided to grant equal and communal use of the woods to both parties. Louis showed an attempt at preventative dispute management, claiming to have instigated the investigation not only because of the current argument, but also "lest disagreements take place hereafter in the future." Neither group was to make any further clearances, "so that both sides, namely the monastery and our fisc, might both have rights, equally and communally to the same woods (*silva*) for the pasturing of animals and pigs, for the making of firewood, and for utilizing the fisheries, without any kind of impediment from the other party." The parties would also alternate payments of pannage dues or *pastionaticus*, suggesting concern that the decision prevent further accusations of unfair use by either party. This imperial charter can therefore be compared to other early and high medieval dispute resolutions that emphasize negotiation, reconciliation, and compromise rather than absolute decisions.⁵³

Louis's charter is also a reminder that multiple parties were interested in quelling conflict; monastic landlords could act in unison with secular and religious leaders to settle possible local resistance and to manage local authority. In 1033, the residents of the villa of Walendorp were not rendering the services, respect, or taxes (*census*) that they owed to St. Martin's of Metz, and its distance from Metz might have contributed to the problem.⁵⁴ When the abbot of St. Martin's could no longer deal with Walendorp, he approached Poppo, and the two agreed to a property exchange, with both abbeys gaining properties closer to their power base. Stavelot most likely benefited from this exchange, as Poppo was doing a favor for his friend. The connections of friendship, alliance, and official protection are also seen in the other participants in the exchange. This document highlights not only

ties between St. Martin's and Stavelot, but also those within the broader community. The transfer of use rights was conducted by Duke Gozilo and Count Frederic, two secular leaders who were the monasteries' advocates. This agreement was then ratified by Emperor Conrad III and the bishops of Cologne, Metz, and Liège.

As this case shows, resistance to monastic authority by local populations was not limited to seizure of or claims to property. Local groups often ignored, neglected, or conveniently forgot to render dues and obligations owed to the monastery. For example, in 1126 Abbot Cuono discovered certain "depraved and ruinous" behavior by residents of Stavelot, who had been neglecting to pay tithes of wood or *calx* (chalk/limestone).⁵⁵ Such passive resistance mirrors some monastic tactics, such as refusing to hold masses or sing offices, which were often their spiritual obligations to secular authorities. This could be even harder to control than active or violent seizures of land, and could, in turn, be overlooked by abbots concerned with more immediate and pressing conflicts.

Disputes and political clashes were accompanied by loss of profits, destruction of agricultural properties, and loss of life. In the opening passages of the Longia charter, Wibald claims his position as abbot through both God's grace and imperial investiture, and then defines his role: it was his chief goal to support and nourish the monastery and all of its properties. As things turned out, Wibald spent much of his abbacy dealing with conflicts. His letters (encompassing only a few decades) contain scores of conflicts on multiple levels—small acts of resistance, doctrinal disputes, contested elections, and regional power struggles.

Wibald faced many internal problems, such as his discovery that at the villa of Andernach that the monastery's "unfaithful officials" (*infideles ministri*) had abused their powers and greatly reduced monastic property, which they had pawned or pledged away. Concerned about the large-scale alienation of monastic agricultural property, Wibald asserted his abbatial authority in person, traveling to Andernach along with some of the monastery's faithful servants (*fidei*). Once he arrived, he questioned people and made an accounting of the alienated monastic possessions. He issued general reminders that monastic properties were not to be alienated by anyone without the express permission of the monastery, and then tried to reverse the losses. He consolidated the vineyards through two property exchanges and then issued instructions for the management of the newly consolidated vineyards by a slave named Nichoiz who had managed vineyards for the villa in the past.⁵⁶

Andernach was a fairly substantial management exercise, but abbots occasionally managed even the smallest estate concerns. Wibald once personally collected the pig tax from a problematic fisc.⁵⁷ The monks of Corvey similarly faced heavy local opposition to the collection of the *annona*, or grain dues; they complained to Wibald that they were "by no

means able to wrench [the tithes] away from the farmers.” A second letter adds that the problem with the food tithes had become so extensive that the monks would soon have nothing to eat or drink.⁵⁸ The monks pled with Wibald to become involved, writing, “we do not need your presence any less than do our brothers at Stavelot.”⁵⁹ In the absence of the abbot, the monks had less ability to assert their authority successfully over local residents who neglected traditional obligations and taxes.

Wibald’s letters show not only the scope and range of his abbatial power, which allowed him to intervene in local, regional, and national conflicts and decisions, but also the limitations of that power. In the Longia charter, after detailing what he hoped to accomplish as abbot, Wibald confessed that he had fallen short of accomplishing his goals, due to imperial demands on his time, labor, and income.⁶⁰ Furthermore, he noted that he was always busy and exhausted by the extremity of the conflicts caused by “the evil of the age.”⁶¹ His necessary, frequent absences, mandated by managing the estates of multiple houses while also fulfilling imperial and papal demands, created a clear weakness. In these periods the monastery routinely suffered from increased harassment by secular leaders who used this as an opportunity to advance claims to monastic properties.

Wibald’s leadership of two houses was also personally taxing. Even in times of relative calm, the monks of Stavelot and Corvey politely sparred with each other over which monastery needed Wibald’s time and presence more, and he felt pulled between them.⁶² In a response to a plea by the monks of Corvey, he wrote that he was both mentally and physically exhausted. In a letter to his friend, Bishop Anselm of Havelberg, Wibald confided that “my spirit has been swirling around, tossed and troubled as if [I were] drunk.”⁶³ He equated the monasteries to wives, writing that he had been troubled by his first wife (Stavelot), who was “bleary-eyed, infertile and ill beyond measure.” The second woman (Corvey), whom he married later, was “plumper, but no less blind and sterile than the first, and is moreover more obstinate, making new demands and quietly grieving.”⁶⁴

At one point, Wibald even appears to have attempted to step down as abbot of Stavelot; his reasons are a reminder that the monasteries continued, throughout their histories, to face the types of conflicts over land, power, and relations with secular leaders that had plagued them at their foundations. In a letter to Henry, a monk of Stavelot, Wibald explained that his primary reason for wanting to step down as abbot was that “the ruin of our order is so great... that I am not confident that I will be able to relieve it.”⁶⁵

According to Wibald, Stavelot’s problems ran deep—its benefices were devolving daily and its advocates were sinful, vicious, and cruel men who did not defend the poor. The monastery’s *ministeriales*, who should have been defending the monastery, especially in the abbot’s absence, had instead turned against it.⁶⁶ Finally, Wibald wrote that Stavelot’s possessions were

being constantly alienated, and agricultural lands were devastated and neglected. Neither religious nor secular powers seemed to be helping, and Wibald felt that if he stepped down as abbot, he could focus on Corvey. These letters, written toward the end of his career, express the frustration and helplessness he felt because even his abbatial authority and alliances were not sufficient to manage and protect both houses. Ultimately, Wibald did not abandon Stavelot and Malmedy, but this crisis of confidence is indicative of the scale and seriousness of the conflict the monasteries faced.

In his biography of Frederick Barbarossa, Otto of Friesing wrote that “at that time all over the world the whirlwind of war filled the earth and involved practically the whole empire in seditious uprisings.” Henry, the count of Namur (r. 1139–89), was right in the middle of these small-scale wars. He had been in conflict with Archbishop Adalbert of Trier over the monastery of St. Maximin since 1138. According to Otto, these two “exempted nothing from pillage and fire.”⁶⁷ These regional power struggles could affect individual properties and local economies and draw in a range of allies and enemies.

In 1147, Henry of Namur was fighting the counts of Lon and Dasburch. Because their “*discordia*” had been hurting the entire region, Wibald was already working to encourage peace between the parties.⁶⁸ At the same time, one of the monastery’s allies, their advocate Henry the Count of Rupe, had been moving toward open war with the count of Monte Acuto, and Wibald had been called in to try to negotiate a peace. Instead, Stavelot was sucked deeper into the conflict. For unknown reasons, Henry was allied with a man named Eustachius, who he encouraged to invade and occupy Stavelot’s villa at Turnines.⁶⁹ The impact of this invasion is seen in a tense letter from Bovo, a priest of Stavelot, who in September 1147 urged Wibald (who was once again away from the monastery) to return. Bovo had been “unable to gather any fruit from his labor” because (as Wibald well knew) the monastery was caught in the middle of larger external problems. These included conflicts in Condustrio and the fact that the count of Namur and his adversaries were devastating the region.⁷⁰

The same batch of correspondence included a letter from Robert, the deacon of Stavelot, who expressed his frustration with Wibald’s long absence, reminding him that the monks faced many pressures and were “unable to bear your delay any longer.” The letter was short and uninformative, but Robert also sent a messenger to speak to Wibald. This messenger likely had two purposes; to persuade Wibald in person and to convey secret or private information that could not be trusted to writing. Robert claimed to hope that through both the letters and the “living voice of the messenger,” Wibald would “come to fully understand the condition of our lands.”⁷¹ Unfortunately for the monks of Stavelot, at this point Wibald was kept away by imperial affairs. He wrote to Robert and acknowledged his “long absence from the monastery of Stavelot” and discussed the conflicts

briefly. He also wrote that the letters had made his eyes fill with tears, as he would love to return, but needed to remain with the emperor.⁷²

In 1150, three years after the invasion of Turnines, Henry of Namur again involved Stavelot's properties in his larger struggles. Another of Wibald's absences corresponded to an increase in local conflict.⁷³ This time, Henry of Namur and Henry of Rupe (Stavelot's advocate) were now allied in a bitter struggle over the property of Monte Acuto against the bishop of Liège (also named Henry!) and Godefrid, the count of Monte Acuto. The bishop of Liège tried to gain Wibald's support, warning that the count of Namur was leading a "venomous" faction.⁷⁴ However, at the same time, Godefrid, allegedly using the bishop's forces, violently seized another of Stavelot's villas, Okereyes.⁷⁵

Wibald claimed that the bishop had ordered the attack, since without the bishop's involvement, Godefrid would never have dared act against the monastery. (In the earlier Peace of God movements, the rights of bishops to invade properties in their own districts had been upheld.)⁷⁶ Because of the widespread violence in the region, and the bishop's involvement, Wibald appealed directly to the emperor, who ordered the bishop to stop attacking Stavelot's properties.⁷⁷ Despite the pressing need for his presence at Stavelot, Wibald again returned to Corvey, and within a few weeks, Turnines had once again been attacked, this time by the count of Lon (Henry of Namur's enemy). Two monks who were at Turnines were captured, including one named Boso (perhaps the same man as Bovo who had first brought this conflict to Wibald's attention).⁷⁸

It was at this point that, in a letter to Arnold II, archbishop of Cologne, Wibald wrote that he could not travel because of the continuing conflict "in our ancient woodland solitude."⁷⁹ Though these conflicts were rooted in the fact that Stavelot controlled valuable and established estates that could be the target of complex political conflict, Wibald could still invoke the cultural and religious images of that same landscape as an isolated wilderness zone of protection and immunity. By selectively presenting his monastery as isolated and sheltered, and by using the image of the forest as an inviolate area of monastic idyll, Wibald manipulated ideas about monastic relationships with the landscape that had been present since the monasteries' foundations.

Creating a Morality of Resource Use: Secular Versus Spiritual

From the moment of their foundation, the monks of the Ardennes constantly worked at shaping and explaining their relationship with their royal patrons and the nobility. The houses were directly linked with royal pursuits and

governance, and the monks had no desire to sever those political and economic ties. Instead, they actively pursued means of morally and culturally setting themselves apart from their secular peers. One of the many ways that they established the differences between them was by culturally distinguishing “good” monastic use of wild resources from “bad” noble use of those same resources. Religious sources from the Ardennes establish differing cultural uses of wild game and fish resources, and tell about noble abuse of the relationship between animals and men, notably setting up excessive noble hunting and sport as antithetical to monastic “harvesting” of abundant nature.

Large portions of the Ardennes were hunted by government officials and nobility. As a product of noble culture, the medieval hunt empowered lords socially and politically by allowing them to express secular dominion over both the landscape and their social inferiors. It was also a means of elite community building. Louis the Pious incorporated hunts into his royal assemblies, arguing that it served as social glue for the courts, and hunters, royal falconers, and foresters took on a particular prominence at the Carolingian court because the extent of royal hunting gave them frequent and personal access to the king.⁸⁰

The fact that the Ardennes were important to both the monks living in it and the Carolingians makes this an excellent place to look at how monastic identity was formed alongside and against royal identity. These monasteries’ relationships with monarchs (sometimes cooperative, sometimes competitive, but rarely antagonistic) mattered to how they perceived themselves, their landscape, and their relationship with their neighbors and the natural world. The kings competed with them not only over taxes and economic control, but also over how and by whom the landscape was culturally appropriated. The presence of the monks was also important to the Carolingians, who protected and supported the monasteries as part of their role as Christian kings.

In the monasteries’ religious sources, hunting was often associated with the military and social goals of the noble communities and seen as something that the saints needed to regulate or even prevent. A miracle story from the monastery of Saint-Hubert suggests that there were ways in which monastic communities were able to cooperate with nobles, regulate hunting practices, and absorb this noble pastime into their own identity. But it also demonstrates how the saint could intervene directly in the hunt, controlling the behavior of wild animals to punish noble neglect of established customs. The story involves Theoderic, the count of the Ardennes, and his brother, who wanted to go hunting in the forest (*silva*). Jammenold, their master of the hunt, took them out into the “*ecclesiasticos saltus*” surrounding the monastery. At first they found nothing there to hunt, but Jammenold promised them that if they hunted “in the name of St. Hubert” and then offered the saint portions of the hunt they would have

success. And so they started out again.⁸¹

They gathered their dogs and unexpectedly flushed out a boar of “unanticipated size.” Finally, after many attacks it was near death, “and it retreated into the area near the monastery. Then, as if it had suddenly surrendered to the saint, it stopped, immobilized.” At which point Jammenold (here labeled as the “*venatorum praepositus*”—a surprisingly religious label for a hunter, as *praepositus* is a title associated with priests and bishops) and his men cheerfully followed after it. When he saw the immobilized boar, the master hunter then ordered that his men bring it to Theoderic and then find another, smaller boar to give to the saint.

Yet as soon as the hunter ordered this, “the boar, as if it resented having to pull itself away from the saint, tore into the pack of dogs, evaded capture, and moved away from the tangled nets of the hunters.” Thus, when Jammenold had decided to bring this boar to his secular lord and then seek out a smaller boar to give to the saint, the saint (who had actually been keeping the animal trapped, ensuring its eventual capture and donation to himself) was angered and let the boar free. This escape, the author points out, was due to the fact that the chief hunter had violated the traditional hunting customs. From the earliest times (*ab antiquo*), there was a firm custom throughout the Ardennes of tithing the first fruits of every type of animal hunted to the monastery. This was in recognition of the fact that, before his personal conversion, St. Hubert had been an avid hunter. (This, the author points out, is also why people who hunted did so in St. Hubert’s name.)

Not all saints were so permissive of hunting, however. Gregory of Tours told the story of another hunter chasing a giant boar. When the boar fled into the area where the hermit St. Aemilianus lived, the hunter’s dogs could not follow it. The boar was protected, and the hunter in turn was converted to the monastic life.⁸² Hunting represented elite attempts to create and solidify group identity. It is unsurprising that in many monastic religious sources, themselves efforts to create a communal identity for the monks, hunting is represented negatively. Monastic disdain for hunting was linked to its close association with the military. The nobles so vilified in the *Passio* could “hunt for sport whenever they wished.”⁸³ This was a frivolous leisure activity, an outgrowth of the lax and selfish secular culture they sought to flee. The monks, for whom the *vita Remacii* expressly states that “the flattering enticements of this world should be avoided,” clearly saw elements of the military lifestyle as extravagant.⁸⁴ After eloquent praise of Gaul’s natural beauty, the *vita Remacii* notes that this beauty was marred because Gaul “was given over to the voluptuous luxuries beyond all other provinces, and was furnished with strong, warlike, and fierce men.”⁸⁵

Stories from other contemporary monasteries show similar attempts to vilify the noble lifestyle. The monastery of Lure, located at a key strategic spot near the Vosges, became a pawn for secular power games. To

emphasize the secular leaders' abuse of the religious house, the author of the tenth-century *Life of Deicolus* told stories that linked hunting with noble culture and amorality. For example, a Count Eberhard allegedly used Lure as a horse stable and as a kennel for his hunting dogs. His son held the monastery "invincible like a knight in his castle," and his grandsons allegedly practiced hunting drills within the monastic compound.⁸⁶ The *Annales Fuldenses* for 881 similarly associated noble animals with desecration: when the Vikings invaded the region, "their horses made their stable in the royal chapel."⁸⁷

Dogs were the other animal frequently associated with the noble hunt, and in several of the monastic sources, they become the embodiment of another of the moral threats posed by the noble lifestyle: greed. This link was not new; though dogs could be understood as loyal animals, (monastically produced) bestiaries also emphasized their greed and irrational appetites. "A dog's nature is such," according to a thirteenth-century bestiary, "that it returns to its vomit and eats it again." Dogs chase imaginary meat even if they have real meat in their mouths, and though the dog's life is "moderate," the animal serves as a warning against gluttony.⁸⁸ And hunting was not only indulgent; it could also be seen as wasteful. Finally, as opposed to other means of exploiting animal populations, nobles were often "profligate" in their hunting behavior, injuring animals without killing them.⁸⁹

This association of dogs with greed also drew on the Bible. In a letter disciplining monks, Wibald drew on biblical example: he invoked Jesus' words in Matthew 15:26, in which Jesus initially refused to help a woman he felt to be inferior, because "it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." Monastic time, goodwill, and resources should not, Wibald felt, be thrown to the unworthy and greedy dogs.⁹⁰ In another case, Wibald again linked criminal greed with dogs. Some property was seized from peasants, and Wibald brought the matter to the bishop's attention. In his appeal, Wibald quoted Isaiah 56:10: "mute dogs are unable to bark." The full passage equates dogs with both laziness and greed; "loving their sleep, shameless dogs who never know satiation."⁹¹

The second book of St. Hubert's miracles contains a story about a conflict between the monastery and a secular leader that uses dogs to show a breach of moral and behavioral norms. The miracle story blends the hagiographical and administrative formats; it concerns a specific local property conflict, has a charter-like dating clause and a witness list, and may, in fact, incorporate fragments of a charter of donation. According to the author, in 841 Count Odo legally handed over to the monastery some properties from his holdings.⁹² One of the witnesses was allegedly Odo's nephew, Goderannus. Yet after Odo's death, Goderannus invaded the property, denying that he had ever given his assent to the exchange. A long dispute followed. The monks frequently sent legates to him; they implored him in many ways, even

asking that if human concerns would not stir him, then maybe he would fear the potential of divine punishment. But conflict continued to simmer.

One day, Goderannus arrived at the monastery while traveling, and the monks offered him hospitality. They invited him to eat with them, and as they were preparing to eat they said prayers, taking the bread in their hands and reciting psalms. This model of appropriate behavior was then given an antithesis by Goderannus. "Since he was of a perfidious mind," he took offense, and then "with indignation and overweening pride, ordered the bread to be thrown to his dogs, who were barking." Miraculously, even though they were hungry, the dogs refused to eat the blessed bread. The monks wondered at the "spectacle," but Goderannus was unmoved and mocked the monks.

But even though he stormed out, "divine vengeance followed him, and suddenly he was struck by pain in his guts." He recognized this as punishment, and sent legates to the monastery, and had them announce that he had repented. He immediately began to recover from his illness. When he later seized the property again, the illness returned. Finally, he "shouted groans rather than words, and in the end, amidst cries, while dying, he freely released the properties that were his to the church."⁹³

Though the man's death is the final phase of the story, the miracle of the dogs is a particularly interesting interlude. It highlights different attitudes toward food and hospitality: the monks see the meal as a truce, but Goderannus uses it as a chance to gain an emotional advantage over his opponents. He is a greedy and "perfidious" man, who abuses blessed bread and attempts to use the natural greed of dogs to insult the monks. This attempt is forestalled by miracle, as the dogs' natural hunger is contravened.

To complete the chain of monastic associations of nobles, hunting, dogs, and greed, the *vita Popponis* directly states that military endeavors are a result of greed and hunger for glory. In this story, Poppo, as a young soldier, began "along with some of his comrades, to turn in towards an appetite for empty glory."⁹⁴ However, he soon backed off from participating in the more violent and greedy aspects of military life. The *vita* relates that "having seen the danger and the precipice that were consequently going to be the ruin of many, he, who had stepped towards the entrance to the world, wished to draw back his foot."⁹⁵

It is the *vita Popponis*, in fact, that contains one of the clearest visions of hunting and other woodland "games" as antithetical to monastic views. In this story, Poppo, as a representative of Richard of Verdun, joined the Emperor Henry II who was holding an assembly in the forests near Nijmegen (in 1015). At this meeting, Poppo directly challenged the morality of imperial uses of wild game as part of noble leisure activities. This challenge not only clearly set monastic and royal views of hunting and appropriate uses of the natural world in opposition, but also claimed the triumph of the monastic view through imperial concession.

When Poppo arrived at Nijmegen, “he was received most magnificently and honorifically at the court,” and by Henry, “the equally pious and politically powerful Emperor of the Romans.”⁹⁶ The monk’s sanctity “inspired the humility and mildness of the aforementioned emperor,” who was willing to hear Poppo’s petitions. However, though this shows how well secular leaders could work alongside monastic interests, the bulk of the story shows the stark contrast between the culture of the imperial court and the monastic attitudes and opinions of Poppo, himself once a part of that same culture.

When Poppo arrived, the king and his companions were “occupied outdoors with staged imperial games (*ludi*), and by the type of spectacle (*spectaculum*) that delighted the emperor and his men.” The royal antics shocked and appalled Poppo, for he saw that in the middle of the host of sporting men, “A certain naked man with his limbs covered in honey was being displayed to bears. He was, because of his danger, especially fearful that with all of the honey having been consumed these same bears would by chance reach his bones. The king was so held captive by love of this spectacle before his eyes, and was showing little concern and had little fear for the man’s danger.”⁹⁷ Poppo chided the king about his participation in “this perverse act towards a Christian, and soon restrained him, along with his highest-ranking men from [continuing with] this spectacle.”⁹⁸ This story is a reflection of the monastic imagining of not only nature, but also of their relationship with the monarchs (which, as the next chapter shows, often went hand-in-hand).

In keeping with Stavelot-Malmedy’s interest in maintaining healthy and productive relationships with the crown, the emperor himself is not depicted as villainous or wrong, but simply (as Poppo himself almost was) as mistakenly consumed by the immediate allure of sport. Henry was humbled by the holy man’s indignation, and obeyed “his pleas just as much as his chastisements.” After swiftly assenting to the petitions that Poppo had brought with him from Richard, Henry, who “had so honorably received [Poppo] when he arrived,” accorded him equal honor upon his departure. The *vita*’s narrative then follows Poppo as he returned to Richard, successful in his petitions, and content in having prevented the noble and pious emperor from having morally strayed by abandoning himself to secular entertainments.⁹⁹

In this story, the author of the *vita* deliberately depicted the nobles as abusing their own control over the natural world and succumbing to the temptations of sport and idleness. The woodland “game” was a violent and extravagant part of the spirit of indulgent leisure that had overtaken the king and his entourage in the forests. Poppo reacted immediately to this; the intensity of his revulsion was perhaps due to his recognition that he himself formerly had been a part of that martial and secular culture of display and arrogance. This story highlights the folly and extravagance of human abuse of nature; the men were perverting the roles of man and beast. Interestingly,

this parallels the story of the wolf attack on the shepherd, when Poppo was repelled by a similar violation of the human/animal balance.¹⁰⁰ The bear story is also linked to the association between noble sport and greed, as the centerpiece human exploitation of a wild animal's natural greed. As monks repeatedly pointed out throughout the Middle Ages, humans were not to succumb to or support such base animal instincts, but instead to rise above and restrain them, just as they were to curb their own desires for sport and entertainment.

The *vita Popponis*'s unfavorable representation of noble attitudes toward the natural world is made even more prominent when the bear story is compared to the story that immediately precedes it in the *vita*. The author reports that before arriving at the imperial court, Poppo stayed at a small property in Betuwe belonging to the monks of St. Vedast. This visit was associated with a fishing miracle that clearly shows a proper, humble set of relationships among men, nature, and God.

The *vita* reports that Poppo had helped to restore the property to the monastery and was well known to the people in the region. The residents, having heard of his arrival in advance, prepared to welcome him with full hospitality; they declared that "one of them should go and eagerly let out the nets for catching fish." But the man assigned the task was unsuccessful, and "produce from the difficult labor evaded him for a long time, and he sent the nets back empty to his *dominus* by the shore."¹⁰¹ But, thinking of Poppo's holiness, and praying for swift success in providing for the holy man, the estate's *paterfamilias* ordered that the nets be sent out once more. "What then?" the *vita* continues, "Their nets, having been let out, captured no fewer fish than the nets of Peter held; soon they had gathered a great multitude of fish, so many as they had never before hoped to catch in the future."¹⁰²

These local landholders, praying for nothing more than an ability to feed and support Poppo, were rewarded with what the author of the *vita* interpreted as an abundance miracle comparable to St. Peter's success on the day Jesus called him to become a disciple. This miracle was seen as a sign of Poppo's holiness; just as the men were unable to count the number of fish that they caught after invoking the holy man's name, so too were they "unable to estimate either the amount or the nature of the sanctity of the blessed man." Poppo, hearing the story upon his arrival, "gave thanks, therefore, for the things gathered together for them from the *beneficium* of the divine piety of the Creator."¹⁰³

As the miracle itself acknowledges, this taps into a long tradition of divine bounty represented by miraculous catches. This fishing miracle is not interesting for its novelty, but for its relationship to the bear story that immediately follows. Together the two vignettes show that the monks differentiated between their own views of wild animals and secular views. The humble men from the monastic estate acknowledge their inability to command nature to meet their needs. Recognizing God as the source of

natural bounty, they pray only that they might have enough fish to provide hospitality, and are rewarded with unimaginable abundance. In contrast to this, the nobles extravagantly flaunt their fleeting control of nature, and are therefore chastised by God's representative (though in an entirely secular setting; the bear incident does not involve a miracle). Because the wild and domestic resources of the forest were shared and even at times communal, they could become vehicles for monastic groups to differentiate themselves from nobles and other neighbors.

Livestock Theft, Retributive Miracles, and Religious Identity

The monks also worked to establish control over domestic nature, and the importance of controlling natural resources is seen in the prominence given in both administrative and narrative sources to dealing with instances of resource theft, tithing fraud, and violations of agricultural labor rules. Examining these points of conflict supplies evidence for the monastic cultivation of agricultural and animal resources and for the ways that the monks (and their allies and enemies) assigned value to nature and how they used resources as part of the process of building cultural identities. Since monastic communities viewed their land and properties as both economic and cultural resources, theft of animals and goods from monastic lands was easily drawn up in ideas about monastic cultural power and religious identity.

Since Stavelot's properties included not only woodlands, but also wood pasture and pasture land, the monks and their dependents kept a wide variety of draft and food animals. Theft of these animals was often opportunistic, frequently involved violence, and garnered much attention from authorities, as it was a serious threat both to local livelihood and to monastic authority. Animals could be considered property, but they also had symbolic meaning, and thus livestock theft was a complex cultural event as well as an economic one.¹⁰⁴ One story from the *Miracula* describes Remacle's punishment of a man who denied the saint's rights to animal resources. The miracle tells the story of a man who was part of a group bringing tithes to the monastery, including a ram that had been dedicated as monastic tribute. En route, the man was possessed by a "malicious spirit." At night, when the group had settled in for the evening, he ate the ram. Because of the sin of eating what had been given to God, the man's face and mouth became permanently disfigured.¹⁰⁵

The story of another of Stavelot's dependents again links animal theft to religious authority. An unnamed man made a trip to the monastery on the annual festival of St. Remacle.¹⁰⁶ He had purchased two cows as an offering

to the saint. Tithes were symbols of monastic control over these properties, and these cows in effect became the saint's property. When the cows were stolen, the peasant thus tried to force the saint to intervene. He went to Remacle's altar and placed a *denarius* there, saying, "If it pleases you, most holy confessor, why were my cows stolen, which I acquired through my labors in your service? From this day forth, you will not get another of my *denarii* unless you restore to me what has been lost."¹⁰⁷ By threatening a suspension of the saint's tribute, the man was associating loyalty with retributive justice. This lay man's actions resemble the monastic tool of the "humiliation of saints," a tactic similarly used to entice saintly protection and aid.¹⁰⁸

Although there is no clear evidence of humiliation of relics by the monks of Stavelot, an example does survive from Corvey. As part of a particularly nasty conflict with Folcwin of Sualenberg and his brother, Widekind, Wibald reported that a "band of thieves" had pillaged and destroyed Corvey's estate at Huxaria. The monks of Corvey then placed the relics of Sts. Vitus and Just on the ground along with a crucifix and then stopped singing offices and ringing the bells. Shortly thereafter, King Frederick I ordered the monks to resume their offices and to restore the saints to their place of privilege.¹⁰⁹ In a similar boycotting of religious services, the monks of Corvey appear to have gotten into an argument with the priest, who threatened to withhold communion, even on the Rogation Days, and then left, to the disbelief of the monks.¹¹⁰

In the case of the cows, the peasant's threat seems to have been successful, because that very night, he chanced upon the house to which his stolen cows had been led. The owner of the house recognized that the cows were not his but didn't know who they belonged to. The peasant then claimed the cows as "the cows of St. Remacle," whereupon the owner of the house returned them to the man without any protest.

This story is ripe with religious symbolism and ceremony. The dedicated cows are brought to Stavelot on the saint's feast day (the same day Rigoldus would have to appear and confirm the Germigny settlement). The cows are explicitly labeled as "the cows of St. Remacle," which reminds readers of another feature of the natural world controlled by both the monks and the saints: "The fountain of St. Remacle."¹¹¹ Finally, the theft of the cows triggers (in the monks' telling) not an administrative response, but a religious one; the man goes to the monastery and engages directly with the saint, even borrowing some of the religious tactics of the clergy. Like the monks' threatened excommunication and ritual cursing of violators of the Germigny agreement, this peasant and the monks who told his story connected the theft of resources to the experience of the monastery's religious rituals.

Similar miracle stories about the theft, misappropriation, or abuse of monastic property or land-use rights appear frequently in the *Miracula Remacii*. Many emphasize both the vengeful and redemptive nature of the

saint and the monastic community. The first miracle in the collection features divine punishment of a violation of communal land-use custom.¹¹² A man named Joseph allowed his horse to graze in a field that did not belong to him.¹¹³ He was struck down by a fiery bolt of lightning, thrown from the horse, and hit in the head, though he was eventually healed through monastic prayer.

In another retributive miracle, a man named Amulgerus was absolved from all servile labor one Sunday during the harvest.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, he and his unnamed wife continued to work on the Sabbath and while they were bringing the harvest home, one of the stalks of wheat struck Amulgerus's right eye. He was blinded and suffered both from "the encircling darkness" and from the pain of the destroyed eye. He was finally healed while standing near Remacle's tomb, while the monks were chanting vespers. These stories emphasize the monks' (and Remacle's) concern that holy day bans on agricultural labor and communal agricultural customs be observed. It also repeats the message that the monastic community had a role in forgiveness, and thereby a controlling voice.

Amulgerus, violating the Sabbath, was punished with only partial blindness. Joseph, violating pasture rights, was injured, but lived to repent publicly. These injuries ensured that they and others might learn a lesson, but not be made completely disabled. Of equal import is the fact that these punishments were inflicted through the agency of the very products that the men were illicitly harvesting. The natural objects that inflicted divine punishment were linked to the men's sins, and showcased the power of the saints and God to use the natural world to control human affairs.

The first author of the *Miracula Remacii* (writing around 850) not only opened the collection with Joseph's story, he also composed many of the chastisement stories, emphasizing the importance of the monastery in restoring the balance upset by violations of "divine law and human law." In many of the land-use miracles, though Remacle and the other saints are the active agents of divine will, the monasteries themselves become the site of miracles, linking the monks to the assertion of authority and the dispensing of mercy. The very first sentence of the miracle collection locates the events within a framework linked to the monastic space itself: "in that time in which the fabric of our church's altar was being built."¹¹⁵ The prominence of these stories within the miracle collection challenges us to ask why the monks would choose to record them, and what they can tell us about the connection between the deliberate construction of monastic identity and the monks' very structured control over their economy and landscape.

The most direct answer, of course, is that theft was a very real problem that monastic leaders needed to prevent. In letters and charters, abbots, bishops, and kings denounced thieves and demanded reparations. Official reactions to theft varied; bishops used ecclesiastical weapons such as excommunication and interdict, and secular leaders imposed financial

penalties. Such protections were important because theft was also a local crime; the people most interested in redressing theft were those whose livelihoods were threatened. Even the Peace of God movement included attempts to prevent cattle theft and noble predation on agriculturalists.¹¹⁶

In one extreme example of this kind of conflict over animal resources, Wibald accused Count Henry of Salme of invading Stavelot's properties. This letter, and Henry's subsequent reply (in which he expresses general hopes that peace can be restored but does not address any of Wibald's specific charges), is the only time that Henry appears in either Wibald's letters or the charters, though the monks had relationships with several other counts of Salme.¹¹⁷ From one villa, Henry allegedly stole one hundred miscellaneous animals as well as one hundred and twenty sheep, eight pigs, and three goats. Three other villas that he targeted lost a total of fifty-two cows and sixteen other animals. This represents the theft of an enormous amount of material wealth. But this same example reminds us that in the Middle Ages there were also cultural layers to animal theft. Henry also allegedly invaded Lernau, stole twenty young bulls and then attempted to blind a man and steal his wife. As if to add insult to injury, he then attacked another villa, stealing six cows and other preparations for a wedding feast.¹¹⁸

Theft could be connected to other acts of violence and political conflict. When Wibald was abbot of Corvey, the former abbot Henry made several attempts to regain his position. One night several of Corvey's *ministeriales* attacked Wibald, and when this failed, stole horses from the stable in their flight.¹¹⁹ The horses they were unable to lead off, they killed with swords. The monastery's other *ministeriales* raised a hue and cry "as was the custom of the land" and called for the thieves to take part in a duel. Corvey's *ministeriales* wanted Wibald and the monks to either kill the thieves or else cut off their limbs. The duel was to have taken place on 13 January 1149, but the men appear to have fled the jurisdiction. A later letter shows that these extreme punishments were replaced by excommunication. The duel was avoided because the monks empanelled a group of men who decided that the man accused of horse theft would instead have to go to the church and take an oath on the relics of St. Vitus, and then testify.¹²⁰ Later in the year, the men traveled to Stavelot and asked Wibald personally for forgiveness and penance. When faced with their contrition, Wibald wrote to the bishop of Paderborn, who had excommunicated the men, and asked that he release them.¹²¹

In a largely agricultural region, animal theft was particularly perilous to a village's economic future, and the local communities often responded directly. In one case, a local magnate named Theoderic stole "not a few animals" in the district of Wellin. A group of locals, all dependents of Stavelot, formed a posse to pursue the thief. Theoderic was forced to garrison his forces in a local castle controlled by the bishop of Liège. The monastery's men invaded the castle and although they captured seven of the

thieves, twelve of Stavelot's men were killed and many others "were most cruelly wounded."¹²²

The consequences of this violent incident show how individual acts of theft or violence could be complicated by preexisting conflicts and alliances in the region. The church of Wellin, one of the churches that owed tithes to Stavelot, buried the dead men, sparking an ecclesiastical controversy. The bishop, whose property and allies had been attacked by Stavelot's men, was already antagonistic toward Stavelot and wanted to place an interdict on the church of Wellin for burying Stavelot's men (seen as rebels against the church) on hallowed ground. Wibald intervened in favor of Wellin. He justified the actions of the local residents against this predatory lord, since the monastery had long sought redress through legal channels without success.

Monks and their allies and opponents fought long and often bitter conflicts over property. These conflicts involved mundane questions of boundaries, taxes, tithes, and use rights. They also involved the extraordinary, since ownership and control of properties was so closely tied to monastic religious authority. Because of the significance of land, power, and heredity, people who struck bargains with the church (and then broke them) were negotiating for the present and for the future, concerned with their heirs and their afterlife. Because of the power the monks held over both present economies and future heavenly rewards, they drew the dead (and the prospect of death) into their transactions, threatening excommunication and damnation, promising burial in sacred space, and even fighting over burial rights. Finally, to protect their possessions and their power in the present world, the monks called on the power and memory of the saints, who routinely crossed the barrier between the living and the dead. So important was control of both forest resources and the cult of saints that in monastic stories, the bodies of humans became the vehicle for expressions of saintly control of resources, and forests became the vehicle for claiming the bodies of saints.

Chapter 4

behavior but also the relationship between wilderness and civilization. The miracles also show the importance of the relationship between the monks and local communities, and reinforce the idea that the monks, as intercessors with the divine, controllers of the written record, and shapers of historic memory, consciously connected their secular and religious interests and authorities.

The second example comes from the *Passio Agilolfi*. Its author constructed an imaginative account of a forest battle near the monastery of Malmedy. The author completely reworked and reimagined both the context and the event, describing a battle won by a king who tore down the forest to use as camouflage. This version shows that the monks were willing to rewrite history in order to highlight the importance of their local environment. This fighting forest, in some ways the clearest expression of the monks' environmental imagination, was created as a deliberate attempt to use hagiographical writing as a political tool in the contemporary conflict over control of Malmedy. Like the *Triumphus*, the *Passio* was a work that used religious authority in an attempt to sway imperial decisions. In the Rogation Days stories, saints intervened (by controlling both nature and human bodies) to punish disobedience or resolve conflict over natural resources. In the *Passio* account, Malmedy's forests become a literary weapon used in a battle over control of the body of a saint.

The Rogation Days Stories: Using Forest Miracles to Link Resource and Wilderness

The Rogation Days miracle story from the *Miracula Remacli* contains a creative manipulation of forest images that promotes the idea that there was a careful balance between the natural and human worlds, with the forest serving as the boundary between them. The author of the miracle shows several instances in which this balance was upset, and highlights the role of the monks and the local community in restoring order. This story reminds people that violations of monastic land rights and imbalances in the natural order could be punished and rectified by the saints and the monks. The monks make legal claims over the forested landscape and police human use of the natural world. The story opens with a dispute over a forest and includes ideas of forest law, local use rights to forests, and forests as symbols of disorder.

The geographic setting for this miracle story is the villa of Weismes (located near Malmedy). Wibald's property lists from 1130 and 1131 name it first among Malmedy's properties; it contained eight and a half manses and owed the monasteries a due of one cartload of wine, and its church owed money, bread, and cheese taxes.³ A charter from 1188 reveals that many local

secular landholders lived in and owned parts of Weismes despite its proximity to the monastery, suggesting that the potential for conflict was high.⁴ And indeed, the miracle opens with a story of conflict; two *leugas* of the monastery's land had been seized by unnamed parties.

Weismes's disputed woodlands become the setting for the miracle, in which a rural man (*vir ruricola*) wandered alone through the woods (*silva*).⁵ He entered the woods armed with iron tools, which he used to cut down wood for use in his own home. Furthermore, he was not only cutting wood from a forest that was under dispute, but he was also working on a holy day—one of the minor Rogation Days—and St. Remacle punished these violations. The man returned home with his heavy load of wood across his shoulders, and using one of the cuttings as a walking staff. Arriving home, he found that he was unable to release the walking staff from his right hand. His wife and servants unsuccessfully attempted to pry his fingers from the wood, and as rumor quickly spread, his neighbors gathered.

It was his neighbors who recognized the stuck staff as a sign of divine disfavor. His wife, sons, and family urged him to go to the basilica and seek forgiveness. When he arrived at Stavelot, the monks noticed him, and once they too discovered his “sacrilege and falsehood” they prayed for him, singing the monastic office of Prime on his behalf. Suddenly, after the office was completed, the man fell to the ground, and the staff was released from his grip. After witnessing this miracle, the monks hung the staff above the gate to the monastery.

The miracle story emphasizes the role of the community of monks in the man's healing, and the role of his local community in recognizing ruptures of both divine and human law. By chopping wood, the man violated a communal religious celebration (acting, in the words of the source, *contra fas*); he was not participating in this communal act, but was instead wandering alone in the woods. When the neighbors all gathered to see him, they participated in judging his act by recognizing the violation and suggesting how he might seek forgiveness. Their active interest in the man's crime and punishment might also reflect use practices in the woodland, as the man appears to have also broken local customary law (acting *contra jus*). In addition to illegally getting the wood, the man was not demonstrably in need; though it was intended for use in his house, he was obviously a wealthier peasant, since he owned his own tools and had servants. The iron tools also seem to have had an association with illicit behavior. The fact that the man did this “wittingly, well-prepared with his own iron tools”⁶ meant that he was intending more than gathering deadfall (which was a common right the villagers may have enjoyed). This man was, in effect, “poaching” firewood.

The involvement of family, neighbors, and the monks in these events is a reminder of the interests of multiple groups in retaining and protecting authority over woodlands, and in preventing such violations from escalating

into larger conflicts. It is unsurprising that the monks are presented as active agents in this man's healing, since by controlling forgiveness they are reasserting their authority over his behavior and making a claim that those who violated monastic rights to forest land could be punished by the saints. Yet the punishment hinges on not only the perceived illegality of the man's use of forest resources, but also on his violation of the Rogation Day labor ban. Through cultural associations made explicit by the author of the miracle, this violation also links the disputed yet domesticated forest to the monastic idea of the forest wilderness. By placing this miracle on a Rogation Day, the author of this part of the *Miracula* challenges the audience to see God's role in establishing boundaries between wilderness and civilization and between men and beasts. He uses this setting to insert a lengthy flashback that tells the story of the fifth-century creation of the three minor Rogation Days by St. Mamertus, bishop of Vienne.⁷

This second story also features forests, and the author was able to blend and link the forests of both eras. They serve as the site of violations of both earthly and divine order, and of moral punishment. Both forest miracles are symbols of the ability of saints and monks to restore order to the natural world and to human affairs. These stories are not told serially—the second miracle is told in the middle of the first one, making the story of the stuck staff into a kind of “framing story.” Right after the author tells the story of the peasant entering the woods, planning on chopping wood, he interrupts with the story of the Rogation Days (set in the past). The forest then plays a prominent role in the Rogation Days narrative, at the close of which the framing story resumes: it is again set in the woods, as the peasant leaves with his full load of firewood. In the Rogation Days narrative the forest serves as a symbol of divine punishment, which increases the forcefulness of the framing story of punishment and forgiveness in a local forest.

The *Miracula Remacii*'s retelling of the early origins of the Rogation Days focuses on the reasons that Mamertus ordered the city-wide penance. Plague had broken out, which was seen as a mark of the sinfulness of the city. As a further sign of divine punishment, there had been “furious wolves and bears bursting in through the gates of the city of Vienne, and they had been devouring many people throughout the entire year.”⁸ The final sign of unrest was a fire that broke out on Easter, burning down the palace and sparking the communal fast that would ultimately restore safety and order.

Although not copying them directly, this story of Rogation Days that is presented in the *Miracula Remacii* is based in part on earlier texts, including that of Archbishop Ado of Vienne, who described the origins of the feast in his ninth-century *Elogium Historicum*.⁹ Ado's narrative also includes the story of the invasion of wild animals. Both the *Miracula* and Ado's account use this invasion of the wild animals of the forest to symbolize the loss of order, which was only restored through communal prayer. Another origin story for the festival is found in a letter written by Sidonius Apollinaris, who

emphasized the communal nature of the event. He explained that Mamertus created a practice that allowed prayer to be experienced by all strata of urban society alike. He claimed that the innovative holy days were created in order to ensure that all men, “the potter just as much as the gardener,” could celebrate days of fasting and prayer together as a community.¹⁰

Sidonius set the Rogation Days in an urban pastoral, but in his version, Ado set Mamertus and the Rogation Days within a cataclysmic narrative that includes many examples of the natural world reflecting political and religious ruptures. Ado describes, among other chaotic events, a Jewish false prophet who led hundreds to their deaths by pretending to be able to control nature and let men walk on water. He also depicts the destruction of Hippo by wild and savage barbarians, in language that equates them to beasts, and tells how similar barbarian attacks on post-Roman Britain forced local populations to flee into the mountains and forests. This steady stream of lamentations and horrors includes the events at Vienne, which also reflect nature’s imbalance.¹¹

Ado wrote that, following frequent fires and constant earthquakes, Vienne faced imminent destruction. Finally, hearing terrifying night-time sounds that boded unnatural death, the whole population of the city gathered together. At that point, they saw a new sign of destruction in the panic-filled behavior of the wild animals of the forest: wolves, bears, and stags were entering through the gates of the city and encroaching on the public space.¹² This transgression, in which animals challenged the boundary separating the human and natural worlds, was the final mark of divine displeasure and Mamertus led the city in collective prayer and fasting. Then, in the middle of the Easter celebrations, the highest building in the city caught fire, and Mamertus checked the power of the fire through a river of tears.¹³ In Ado’s account, the first Rogation Days serve as an example of the ability of spiritual authority and communal prayer to restore order to an imbalanced natural world.

In reflecting Ado’s account, the monk from Stavelot who wrote the *Miracula* version is similarly interested in the issue of the balance between the natural and divine worlds.¹⁴ By juxtaposing the forest and the city, the *Miracula* version demonstrates that medieval people could perceive the sudden intersection of the human and natural worlds as a violation of divine order, and as a threat. It also displays the ways in which this could be corrected through divine intervention and the prayers of a community. In the *Miracula*, the prayers of the community of Vienne restore balance and safety after the incursion of the forest animals, just as centuries later the prayers of the monastic community erase the imbalance created by the peasant’s woodland sacrilege.

By shifting between these two forests, the author blurs the borders not only between the wild and the domestic, but also the boundaries between present and past. In this miracle story one specific temporal moment in the

audience's present ("*in moderno tempore*") was connected to a moment from the region's deep past. Finally, because the stories are set within the context of the miracle collection, the future (or the eternal) is constantly hovering on the margins of the story. The author of this miracle story constructed a complex narrative that weaves together multiple views of the forested landscape and invokes both contemporary religious custom and historical memory. This interlacing of stories and sources separated by centuries is a tactic shared by the next example of monastic imagination.

The Fighting Forest of the Amblève

The attempt by the author of the Rogation Days story to connect nature, history, and the local landscape to miracles is echoed in the *Passio Agilolfi*, written at Malmedy at the end of the eleventh century. It was written at the peak of conflict between Stavelot and Malmedy, and at a time when several different urban bishops were attempting to exert greater control over the monasteries. The rise of Cluny and other Benedictine reform houses was also increasing competition for spiritual authority in the Ardennes. Finally, the eleventh century also saw greater political fragmentation that left the political allegiances and protections of the monasteries in doubt. This story is, at the surface, a tale of martyrdom. But as with most of Stavelot-Malmedy's hagiographical production, the *Passio Agilolfi* also engages with contemporary change and tumult, and when it is contextualized, the drama and power of the author's political and religious agenda becomes clear.

As will be shown, its anonymous author invokes the memory of clearer royal authority during the Carolingian era, perhaps responding to eleventh century crises of kingship. By at several points rejecting the centralizing authority of urban bishops, he may also reflect monastic discomfort at the burgeoning urban revolution in the Low Countries. His pastoral preoccupations suggest continued monastic interest in control of the agricultural landscape and labor. Finally, through a deliberate manipulation of history and images of the natural world, he champions the importance of the local environment in establishing and reifying monastic authority.

This example demonstrates the monks' ability to construct written narrative and to convert forests into rhetorical resources in order to influence conflicts. Its author built up a complex narrative that used natural imagery and the manipulation of local historical memory to claim monastic (rather than episcopal) control over the local landscape and to assert Malmedy's political and religious independence from both bishops and Stavelot. He deliberately blended monastic relationships with the political and natural worlds by ahistorically linking Agilolf's martyrdom to a famous imperial battle, and then connecting imperial victory to a stunning, legendary forest.

The *Passio* is an account of the martyrdom of St. Agilolf, a semi-historical figure associated with both Malmedy and Cologne. As with other semi-legendary saints, Agilolf is more important for what later medieval authors write about him than for what he may or may not have done in his lifetime. Though “constructed” saints provide potentially valuable glimpses of the intersection of imagination and reality, “the ecclesiastical historian must tread cautiously here because there is a little doubt about the saint’s historicity. Dragons exist, but bishops may be mythical creatures.”¹⁵ The legend becomes more central to monastic identity than the historical figure. The story that the author of the *Passio* tells is a skillful combination of several different historic moments. The author structured the bulk of his narrative on retelling two key points: the martyrdom of the saint and Charles Martel’s victory at the Battle of the Amblève (A.D. 716). The *Passio*’s tale of Agilolf’s life and death—and its fabulous and complex reconceptualization of Martel’s victory—are presented as intimately tied to Malmedy and its forested landscape.

The *Passio*’s eleventh-century retelling of an eighth-century conflict was directly related to the protracted internal struggle between Stavelot and Malmedy. The *Passio* appears to have been written, at least in part, with an eye toward influencing the outcome of this conflict by gaining imperial support. The tensions between the two houses had built up over time. Stavelot had become the administrative center, and Remacle and subsequent abbots appear to have chosen to reside there. At the end of the ninth century, amidst Viking raids, economic setbacks, and the redistribution of territories at the Treaty of Meerssen, there might have even been what has been described as a “trial separation” of the houses.¹⁶

This came to a head in 980, when Emperor Otto II formally reduced Malmedy from a partner monastery to a dependent monastery. Stavelot would have legal and administrative primacy and would produce the abbots of both houses, and that from that point forward, any separation of the two monasteries was completely forbidden. Otto’s ruling was complicated by the fact that the bishops of both Liège and Cologne had begun to take an interest in the two houses.¹⁷ Otto took advice from the bishops of Mainz and Metz and from Notger of Liège, but the archbishop of Cologne was not present. Otto’s ruling was a great boon to Notger and the subsequent bishops of Liège since that diocese could then claim to control, by default, both houses.

The immediate setting of the writing of the *Passio* was the intervention, in the 1060s, of Archbishop Anno II of Cologne in the conflict between the two houses. Anno served as a regent during part of Henry IV’s minority (1056-65), dominating royal and ecclesiastical politics. He attempted to seize Malmedy and its revenues several times, and ultimately did take Agilolf’s relics, moving them to Cologne. Finally, he secured control of the house in 1065 when Henry assumed the throne. At a royal court in Trier, Henry gave Anno formal control of the monasteries of Malmedy, Inden, and Villich. One

of Anno's officers was set in charge of Malmedy's administration, and the abbot of Brauweiler (another monastery in Anno's diocese) became Malmedy's first independent abbot.¹⁸

Following the events of 1065, abbot Theoderic of Stavelot spent the next six years attempting to regain Malmedy. This culminated in 1071 when Theoderic brought Remacle's relics to the royal synod at Liège and Henry was convinced to rule in Stavelot's favor "by the blessed Remacle, immeasurably radiating with miracles at the royal court."¹⁹ At this point, the *Triumphus Remaculi* was written to commemorate Stavelot's victory over Anno and to further promote Remacle's cult. The author's opinion about events is clear throughout the work, which is devoted to vindicating Stavelot's claim to Malmedy. The entire first book narrates the contest over Malmedy, beginning in 1061 with the first time Anno attempted to take control of Malmedy. The second book records the events at the 1071 royal assembly, ending with a procession to Malmedy, "which had been restored to its legitimate father" and the return of Remacle's relics to Stavelot.²⁰

The anonymous author of the *Passio Agilolfi*, generally assumed to be a monk from Malmedy, similarly used hagiography as a tactical weapon to reduce Anno's control of Malmedy and to get Agilolf's relics back. This is a deeply partisan and nuanced work, yet most historians and scholars who have worked with the *Passio* have dismissed it as derivative, worthless, and errorridden. Apparently working with very little textual evidence, the monk of Malmedy constructed the legend of Agilolf in a way that reinforced ties to the Carolingian imperial past and attempted to break some of the historical associations between the saint and Cologne. Possibly as a result of the success of the *Passio*'s transformation of historical memory, very little is known of the historical Agilolf. The *Translatio Quirini* also discusses Agilolf, but this source cannot be taken as independent evidence of Agilolf's existence, since it was likely written by the same monk who penned the *Passio*.

Historical "inaccuracies" and the general impression that the *Passio* is largely fictionalized from very, very bare bones have caused the work to be largely ignored. Halkin and Roland, the editors of the monastic charters, noted that "it has been recognized that the *Vita Agilolfi* is of only mediocre value and is filled with errors."²¹ Sylvain Balau wrote: "Malmedy did not provide anything to the historiography except a few scant, mediocre works."²² Yet this work merits attention, both on its own and in the context of the houses' political history. The *Passio*'s author carefully manipulated both local memory and imperial history to make a claim about the present. By altering the historical account of the Battle of the Amblève, he created a narrative that closely associated imperial power with the forested landscape of Malmedy.

But before the *Passio* author's alterations of historical memory can be evaluated, a summary of what is known of Agilolf is in order. The first point

must be that according to all other accounts, Agilolf was in no way involved with the Battle of the Amble've in 716. Agilolf is alleged to have been, at various points, both the archbishop of Cologne and the abbot of Stavelot-Malmedy.²³ The *Passio* states that Agilolf was archbishop of Cologne before moving to become abbot. A papal letter of 748 names him as archbishop of Cologne, and abbatial lists from the monasteries record that Agilolf was the successor to Anglin (att. 744–68) and that his abbacy lasted five years.²⁴ The abbatial series for Stavelot credits Anglin with a forty-four-year abbacy, and other monastic documents record Anglin as abbot in 751.²⁵ Yet other traditions suggest that Agilolf was both a monk and abbot at Malmedy *before* becoming archbishop of Cologne. Most modern analysts agree that Agilolf's life and death took place sometime during the second half of the eighth century, and the year of his death is generally set at 770.²⁶ Yet the author of the *Passio* places Agilolf's abbacy in the *early* eighth century, during the life of Charles Martel. He also sets the saint's death as occurring as a part of the imperial battle of 716.

Not only did the author of the *Passio* insert Agilolf into an event that occurred at least a generation before the saint most likely lived, he also rewrote the account of the battle. The monk of Malmedy's account is based, albeit very loosely, on a historic event, and it incorporates both local historical memory and inherited literary tradition. This altered narrative served to link the pivotal political conflict more directly to Malmedy's forests, and thus to tie imperial memory and patronage of Malmedy more closely with the local religious landscape. The Battle of the Amble've was part of a larger conflict between the Merovingian King Chilperic II (r. 715–721) and Charles Martel (r. 714–41). There are three surviving early accounts of the battle and the political climate that precipitated it: the ninth-century *Liber Historiae Francorum* (hereafter *LHF*), the ninth-century *Annales Mettenses Priores*, and the eighth-century Continuator of Fredegar's Chronicle, *Fredegarii Chronicorum Liber Quartus cum Continuationibus* (hereafter the Fredegar Continuator).²⁷

From these early sources, it appears that Charles had only recently escaped from imprisonment, and the newly elected Chilperic's position was, at best, tenuous. Chilperic's forces seem from the beginning to have been controlled less by this new, inexperienced king than by his powerful magnate, Ragamfred, a Neustrian who had been appointed mayor of the palace in 714. Recognizing the weakness of the Austrasian power base, Ragamfred formed an alliance in 716 with the Frisian Duke Radbod, with the goal of seizing Charles's family treasury from Cologne.²⁸ Radbod's forces successfully held off Charles while Ragamfred and Chilperic crossed through the Ardennes. The *LHF* records that having put together a "host" of troops, they left the Ardennes and marched up the Rhine to Cologne, laying waste to the lands along the way.²⁹

Their combined force did not have the strength to besiege the city, but

they were still able to force Queen Plectrude (Pepin of Herstal's widow) to hand over the treasury. The Fredegar Continuator and the *LHF* provide very brief accounts, but both prominently feature the alliance of the two armies and the attack on Cologne, especially Plectrude's role in the loss of the treasury. They also both claim that the joint army then retreated back into the Ardennes toward Malmedy, where the Battle of the Amblève would take place.³⁰ The third source, the *Annales Mettenses Priores* (the *Metz Annals*) contradicts this chronology and records the attack on Cologne as occurring after the Battle of the Amblève rather than before.

In April 716, Charles engaged the combined Frisian and Neustrian forces at Amblève, near the monastery of Malmedy. This battle was short and decisive, and Charles put the Neustrian army to flight.³¹ Of the three early accounts of the battle, two are very brief. The Fredegar Continuator represents the battle as a short engagement of two parties on the move, and records only that at "the place named Amblève, [the Neustrians and Frisians] were greatly defeated and dispersed by Charles' army."³² The *LHF* is no more informative, noting only that, "at a certain place, Amblève, they were attacked by Charles, who greatly defeated them."³³

The third account, provided by the Metz annalist, is the only detailed story of the battle found in the early sources. The annalist writes that Charles learned that Chilperic and Ragamfred had crossed the Ardennes (*Arduenna silva*) with a large army. He split his army up into multiple groups, and planned to spread out and surround the enemy. Charles himself went into the Ardennes with forty men and gained access to a hill at Amblève overlooking the enemy *castra*.³⁴ From that vantage, he saw that the opportunity for victory lay in the fact that it was lunchtime, and because of the warm, summery weather, the enemy troops were lounging in their tents and in the little patches of shade. Their leisure was so complete that the annalist describes the army as "Bacchic." Reacting to this lack of defenses, one of Charles's soldiers took a single unit of troops to attack the enemy, who recovered in time to take up arms and shields. Charles, seeing the danger that his troops were in, risked his own life to rush in to aid them. He was victorious, and countless enemy troops fled.³⁵

The author of the *Passio* appears to have had access to some or all of the previous written accounts, and it is also possible that he included elements of local lore and regional memory otherwise unrecorded and inaccessible.³⁶ Yet he deliberately and skillfully transformed the inherited historical tradition of the Battle of the Amblève, and the account presented in the pages of the *Passio* differs dramatically from all of the earlier historical works. The degree and nature of these differences is highlighted by the most significant transformation of historical memory, namely the insertion of Agilolf into the royal Carolingian past. By adding a local saint to the history of the battle that took place near Malmedy, the author drew the monastery itself into the realm of imperial memory.

Largely because of this extensive reworking, the *Passio* contains a level of detail concerning the Battle of the Amble've that surpasses even the account in the *Metz Annals*. Certain classicisms are found in both the *Metz Annals* and the *Passio*, such as the terms *clypei*, *satellites*, and *cunei* and also the description of the enemy troops as Bacchic. Yet the sources are at complete variance, and the monk of Malmedy did not borrow any phrases directly from the Metz annalist. He also borrowed none of the language of the *LHF*'s account of the Battle of the Amble've, though he does appear to have been inspired by earlier passages in that same source.

The author's disengagement from the earlier narratives can be seen further in the fact that the author of the *LHF* and the Fredegar Continuator both spend the force of their narratives on the battle at Cologne. They focus on Plectrude's role in the struggle for the kingdom and her strategic use of the royal treasury to ransom the city. But the author of the *Passio* reports that the theft of the treasuries was true raid, not ransom: "Then, in the same way that varied winds stir up the air, the wolves burst in upon the holy flock, and many fell to the sword's edge, just as a crowd of wolves scatters a flock of sheep, and as the predator seizes prey in its bloody mouth."³⁷ Like the wolves and bears who invade the city of Vienne in the Rogation Days miracle, the beastly forces cruelly attacked the city. The author of the *Passio*, though exploring the reaction of the population of Cologne to the siege, does not mention Plectrude, replacing her with an anachronistic Agilolf who deals with the rebels and boosts the morale of the citizens of Cologne. This furthers the author's attempt to place Agilolf within a royal setting, echoing the earlier connections (in both the charters and the hagiographical sources) between Remacle and the royal founders of the monasteries.³⁸

In addition to connecting the saint to the monarch, the author also appears to have made other alterations that transform the *Passio*'s narrative into a supportive claim for the power of the Carolingian house. For example, whereas the *LHF* reports that Ragamfred was the *major palacii* and both the Fredegar Continuator and the Metz annalist name him as the *major domo*, the author of the *Passio* does not recognize the legitimacy of his claim to office, using the term *tyrannus* instead of a legitimate title. Chilperic is also consistently "demoted" in the *Passio*. Chilperic had been appointed on the death of Dagobert III. Yet until that point, he had been serving in a monastery under the name of Daniel. The *LHF* and one of the manuscripts of the *Metz Annals* include discussions of his adoption of the name Chilperic upon assumption of the crown. It is clear that the author of the *Passio* had read about this, because he consistently refers to Chilperic by his ecclesiastical name, Daniel. Although this could have been because the monk chose to acknowledge the clerical name, it is more likely that this serves to cast doubt on Chilperic's legitimacy. The author also continually denies Daniel his royal title, giving it instead to Charles Martel, who throughout the *Passio* is named as *rex*.³⁹

The author of the *Passio* highlights Charles's claim as a part of his attempt to link the monastery to imperial history and authority. This type of direct incorporation of monarchs, particularly Merovingians and Carolingians, into foundation legends was common, and Amy Remensnyder argued that it was a main goal of monastic rewriting of the past. The kings themselves, she claimed, were not only instruments of legend, but actually became figures of legend themselves.⁴⁰ The *Passio*'s attempt to connect Malmedy to this imperial legend is furthered by the ahistorical inclusion of Agilolf and by pushing the natural and religious landscapes into the foreground. Malmedy's forests become the narrative theme that connects the major events and conflicts in the *Passio*.

The local forest first appears in the *Passio* when the author imagines the retreat into the Ardennes by Ragamfred and Daniel as a permanent strategic position. He notes that the tyrants sought out a place to make their base, and found at Amblève (about two *milia* from the monastery) a place "having been densely encircled by the shadiness of the woods, having mountains wellsuited for the building of the defenses of a *castellum*."⁴¹ In this passage, he focuses on the landscape, diverging from the other sources by suggesting that Ragamfred and Chilperic spent a great deal of time in the local woods, allegedly choosing the site because of the abundance of grass. The earliest accounts describe the armies as passing through the Ardennes only briefly, thereby dismissing the relevance of the site.⁴² In contrast, the *Passio*'s emphasis on a fortified enemy gives the impression of a long encampment, giving more relevance to the Ardennes and linking the ensuing battle even more closely with the local forest.

According to the *Passio*, the rebels were also there long enough for Charles Martel to involve Agilolf in his plans. As noted, the author of the *Passio* claimed that Agilolf was the archbishop of Cologne when Ragamfred and Chilperic attacked the city, and that he returned there from his mission work to help the city recover. The author reports that Agilolf was one of Charles's close advisers, and as such would be a good negotiator with the enemy based near the monasteries. Charles, arriving at Cologne to negotiate and to seize control of the city, met with Agilolf (here named a *iudex*) and told him that he was being forced into war by the rage of the barbarians. Because Daniel/Chilperic's and Ragamfred's tyranny in "Germania" was growing, Charles then asked Agilolf to be his delegate, and to go to Stavelot-Malmedy to become abbot.⁴³ This narrative change links Agilolf to the royal house and underscores the importance of Malmedy's location.

Both of these goals underlie the entire *Passio*, and the forest serves as the pivotal image that the author uses to realize them. In his description of Agilolf's martyrdom, the author of the *Passio* emphasizes the close association of Agilolf with his pastoral duties at Malmedy and with his (invented) role as imperial adviser and aide. Even after taking on his role as abbot of Malmedy, Agilolf still acted on Charles's behalf. The author of the

Passio notes that at Easter, Agilolf “celebrated the mass, and then went to the fierce tyrants, so that he could carry out the decree that the king’s command dictated.”⁴⁴ Here, the author links the religious holiday with the saint’s relationship to the king, and in turn to the natural world around Malmedy. On the day of Agilolf’s death, “it was the time when the hoary ice melts off of the mountains and the west wind loosens the fetid earth. The woods (*silvae*) were in leaf, the plants were bright with flowers, the last day of March had limped away and the days of April were fast approaching.”⁴⁵ The importance of the local landscape is reinforced by the emphasis on the site of Agilolf’s death, a green glade guarded by some of Chilperic’s men.

The author of the *Passio* used these guards to further associate Agilolf with Charles Martel and the imperial program. The guards recognized Agilolf as he approached them, and remarked on his role as “Charles’ wise aide and worker.” They noted that he was “famous, noted and venerable through all of Gaul,” and that his “wisdom is put to use on behalf of the king’s business.” They therefore determine to kill him so that “his memory will be erased from the land.”⁴⁶ As the author subsequently demonstrates, however, the murder has the opposite effect, as the land itself becomes a permanent memorial for Agilolf’s passion, and an indelible point in the religious landscape.

According to the *Passio*, Agilolf was killed not because of his saintly efforts at religious conversion, but because of his importance to the king, for the guards note that Charles’s plans would be thwarted by Agilolf’s death, and that by destroying the saint’s body, they could “easily entirely overcome the body of the kingdom.”⁴⁷ The saint’s body itself becomes a contested site, and the living and dying saint and the health and security of the larger realm are bound together. In effect, the destruction of the saint’s living body can be read as equivalent to the later theft of the relics, and in this passage, we can begin to see the author’s underlying goal of restoring the saint’s body to Malmedy.

According to the *Passio*, after having established Agilolf as abbot in order for him to serve as a delegate to the rebels, Charles amassed a large group of soldiers at the edge of the Ardennes. Here the author’s carefully constructed description of the Battle of the Amblève begins; he ties Agilolf to Charles and both of them to the forested landscape around Malmedy. The density of the forest forced Charles to divide his troops into small groups (*cuneis*), and he ordered them to stay on their guard and keep their weapons at hand, in case the woods hid bands of enemy troops. Left with this image of Charles threatened by the forest fortress chosen by his enemies, the audience is then told of his arrival at Malmedy.

According to the *Passio*, after Charles found out about Agilolf’s death, he went to the church at Malmedy, where Agilolf was buried. There, “in great sadness, tears trickled down,” and he prayed that Agilolf help him win a victory over his enemies. After mourning his friend, Charles passed through

a local village “that the inhabitants called ‘*Roma*.’”⁴⁸ A woman, described by the author as a great *mater familias* (a further connection to the Roman imperial past—here the author is playing to Ottonian visions of empire), saw the king and his army, and was astonished by the small number of men. She approached the king and told him that if he listened to her, she would tell him how he could win the day. Her advice would allow Charles to defeat the enemy, and to do so in an astonishing way:

All the men should gather at the exit of the woods (*silva*), and do what I suggest to your highness. Each of them shall take up one single branch (*ramus*) dense with leaves and flowers from the neighboring forest (*nemus*) so as to cover up as much as possible the men and arms and horses. When all are so unusually armed, they should march silently as one group, with slow steps. As it becomes day, they will, with you leading them, reach the place where the enemy is staying. If you give assent to what I tell you, you will delight in a true victory. Let it please you, I say to gather the ranks of all your forces without delay. They all tear off the thickly flowering and leafy branches with which a man, along with his arms and horse, is covered up. A wondrous army is arranged, in which a wondrous façade is to be seen.

This suggestion, marvelous and at odds with all of Charles’s planned maneuvers, is a striking proposal. The boldness of the idea is mirrored by the forceful language of the direct speech assigned to the *mater familias*. She preaches (*sermo*) to the king, and though addressing him with respect, tells him that he must do *exactly* what she suggests. The monk of Malmedy assigns to this woman (who might be replacing Plectrude), in her speech and in her manner, and in the vocabulary of respect with which he refers to her, a position of authority that is both unexpected and compelling.

According to the author of the *Passio*, Charles acted on the woman’s advice and gathered his troops together. They stripped the trees bare, taking up the flowering branches as defensive camouflage. They then marched *en masse* against the encamped rebels, who reacted with predictable fear. The guards saw the disguised troops and believed that they were, indeed, a moving forest. Frightened, they shouted, “let us flee! The forest is hunting us down! Look! The woods are overwhelming us, quickly coming at us!”⁴⁹

The author of the *Passio* did not invent the image of a moving forest; his creativity is seen in the way that he manipulated and altered already extant images, stories, and legends, weaving them together to serve a new purpose. There are earlier Roman accounts of armies in forests, but these describe either the obstacles faced by troops in the forest or the use of trees or scrub as defensive barriers.⁵⁰ The earliest known medieval account of an army disguising itself as a forest in order to sneak up on an enemy army is found

in the *LHF*. As discussed above, the *LHF* is also one of the sources that contains a description of the Battle of the Amblève, and therefore is a source potentially known by the monk of Malmedy who wrote the *Passio*. The *LHF* details a battle led by Fredegund, an early Frankish queen who was acting on behalf of her son, Clothar II (584–629). According to the account, Queen Fredegund organized her forces when she found out that a large army was laying waste to the area near Soissons.⁵¹ Once her troops had gathered, Fredegund gave them the following advice: “Let us rise up against them at night with lamps carried by our allies who will go before us bearing branches from the forest (*ramis silvarum*) and with bells laid on the horses, so that their watchmen will not be able to recognize us. When dawn breaks, let us rush in upon them, and perchance we shall defeat them.”⁵² Fredegund’s troops disguise themselves and march at night, armed and carrying branches in their hands.⁵³ The enemy guards notice the new forest, and see “the forces with their woodland branches, as if in the mountain peaks.”⁵⁴ The guards are ultimately put back at ease, but at dawn Fredegund’s army attacks and destroys them.

Initially, the reader is uncertain why Fredegund suggests belling the horses, a decision that would not be conducive to stealth. It is not until the author of the *LHF* shows the reaction of the guards that the purpose of the bells is made clear. When the guards notice the woodland, one remarks, “Was there not yesterday a field there, where now we see woodland (*silva*)?” The other guard, laughing, replies, “You must have gotten drunk, you have been so completely wiped out. Don’t you hear the bells of our horses that are pasturing next to that woodland?”⁵⁵ The guards are reassured by the sounds of the disguised army, as they associate the ringing of the bells with a tamed landscape. This image, of horses pasturing calmly at the border of the woods, when added to the static descriptions of the new woodland suggests a more pastoral and familiar landscape. Unlike the guards from the *Passio*, the *LHF* guards are not frightened until the army reveals itself—the new *silva* blends in with their perception of a safe landscape.

The reassuring noise of the bells is also found in another account of Fredegund’s battle, written around the year 1000 by Aimo, a monk of Fleury.⁵⁶ Aimo appears to have used the *LHF* story as his source, but he did not borrow directly from it. The narrative structures are the same: Fredegund faces attack, the troops disguise themselves with branches and bells, the enemy guards react, and then Fredegund’s army is victorious. The act of camouflage is described by Aimo as follows: “The army, rising in the middle of the night, entered the *silva* with Landeric in the lead. They stole in softly and lopped off branches from the trees, and placed hanging bells from the necks of the packhorses, and advised their allies to follow their example in all of this. They eagerly cut off the branches of the trees, and seizing one of the bells, did as their leaders had done, and in the morning stood by the fortress of the enemy.”⁵⁷ Again, the ruse was successful. One guard alerted

another to the sudden appearance of the new wood. He said: “What, pray tell, is that there, where this woodland (*silva*) is now seen, when yesterday evening nothing appeared here except for a small coppice (*virgulta*)?”⁵⁸ The other replied, “You are belching out yesterday’s feasting, and are besotted with wine. You have forgotten the nearby woods (*saltus*) that yesterday was found as fitting for pasturing our horses. Don’t you hear the bells that are hanging from the necks of our grazing horses?”⁵⁹ It is worth noting that in the space of a few sentences, Aimo uses three different words for woods and forest: *saltus*, *silva*, and *virgulta* (coppice). The presence of the term *virgulta* further underscores the familiarity and safety of the woods in the mind of the guard—he views this not as a threatening forest but as a domestic landscape. This repeated idea of the new forest a spart of a human and pastoral landscape suggests that Aimo was heavily influenced by his reading of the *LHF*.

The significance of Aimo’s borrowing is most apparent when contrasted to the way that the author of the *Passio* revised the story found in the *LHF*. All three accounts describe an act of forest camouflage. However, by altering the details of his narrative, the author of the *Passio* also changed the way that the forest was perceived—both by the guards and by his audience. Although all three accounts suggest that sound was a key part of medieval perceptions of woodlands, the *Passio* account, through the absence of the bells, sets a different tone. The monk of Malmedy did not, at this stage in his narrative, reproduce the pastoral element found in the other two accounts, which results in a very different sense of the role of noise in the forest. Whereas in the other accounts the bells around the necks of the horses produced a gentle noise that soothed the watching guards and lulled them into a false sense of security, the forest in the *Passio* is full of dangerous and threatening sounds. The troops’ weapons bang together, and the guards hear the “crashing of the approaching forest” and the “steps of the approaching men beat in everyone’s ears.”⁶⁰

The author’s alteration of detail to shift the description of the forest from pastoral to aggressive is also seen in his depiction of the forest-clad army as moving. In both earlier accounts, the guards who noticed the woods already saw the disguised armies in position. The woods were standing still, and elicited comment only because of their novel appearance. In the *Passio*, however, the guards notice the motion and movement of the forest. The final scene presents a threatening and angry forest that hunts down (*persequor*) the watching men. This image of the forest can be set in contrast not only with the earlier accounts of the forest battle, but also with other depictions of the forest employed in the *Passio*. Elsewhere, the author of the *Passio* describes the forest as a *locus amoenus* and a pastoral environment. This inclusion of pastoral elements elsewhere highlights the deliberate changes made in the forest battle scene.

The monk of Malmedy changed the accounts of the forest battle in order

to reflect a different perception of the local forest. But why did he include it at all? Why is this scene interpolated into the Battle of the Amblève? The historical accounts of the battle did not contain any passages that are suggestive of the camouflaged army described in the *Passio*. In fact, the only mention of the natural world at all is found in the *Metz Annals*, whose description of the summer day reflects the false security of a pastoral setting. The forest army and the idea of a threatening, forested landscape was a deliberate addition on the part of the monk of Malmedy. He wove together two different narrative threads to construct a dramatic argument for the importance of Malmedy and its forests.

The *Passio Agilolfi* and the Politics of Hagiography

Landscapes and environmental imagination do not evolve independently of political and cultural desires and events. The next chapter explores the processes through which the monks claimed, converted, and marked out their presence in the broader landscape. As the discussion of conflicts showed, ideas about the proper control of landscape could influence local politics. Here, I want to explore the idea that local politics can, in turn, create new depictions of and ideas about the local landscape. The author of the *Passio* manipulated history and created a narrative that incorporated a little-known local saint and the local landscape itself into the triumphal imperial story. The political and social advantages to the monastery of being more closely associated with the imperial cult through the *Passio*'s emphasis on connections to the battle would have been great. But why append this legend ahistorically to an artificial, and possibly completely fictional, account of Agilolf? Rewriting a battle recorded in a popular historical work was risky enough; why ask for trouble and fictionalize a local martyr? Malmedy's imagined forest is a direct product of the conflict with Anno. This reconfiguration of the past in turn made the role of the saint in the local landscape more real and prominent in monastic memory.

The *Passio* has often been ignored because of its many historical errors; but it is the *Passio*'s fabulous and complex presentation of both historical events and the natural landscape that betray the work's purpose. It was written to protect Malmedy's political status and, like the *Triumphus Remacii*, to show that the saint was the defender of the community. The saint and the landscape become inextricably linked, and the connection between the forests and monastic identity was deepened. By highlighting the importance of Malmedy and its forests in Agilolf's life and death, the monk implicitly condemned Anno's translation (or theft) of Agilolf's relics.

Although the exact date of the composition of the *Passio* is unknown, I suggest that the *Passio* was written after 1062 as a direct reaction to Anno's theft of Agilolf's relics. All scholars are not in agreement with this, most

notably François Baix and Wilhelm Levison, who both argued that the text was written before Agilolf's translation.⁶¹ Baix maintained that the *Passio* was an effort of the monks of Malmedy to associate themselves more closely with Anno and to forge "the relations that the religious of Malmedy were dreaming of establishing with the [new] seat of St. Agilolf." Yet he also suggested that the anonymous author's other work, the *Translatio Quirini*, was written in response to the loss of the body of Agilolf, in order to keep Malmedy on the hagiographical map.⁶² It is also possible that Book 1 of the *Passio* was already underway when Anno expressed interest in Agilolf and Malmedy (maybe even prompting that interest), and that the more reactionary Book 2 was triggered by his arrival and removal of the saint. The timeline of Anno's actions suggests that the monks of Malmedy had ample warning that he was interested in taking the saint, and could well have begun to shore up Agilolf's hagiographical tradition in response.

The translation occurred during the final stages of Anno's pursuit of greater temporal control over the archdiocese. Anno had been Emperor Henry III's chancellor and was a prominent figure in royal government. He became archbishop of Cologne in 1056; in the same year, Henry III died unexpectedly, and his queen, Agnes, became regent for her son, the future Henry IV. Initially, Anno's power declined, but in 1062 he kidnapped Henry, ending Agnes's regency, and serving as one of the regents for the next three years.⁶³ Henry IV's relationship with his regent was one of extremes, and has been described as one of the most interesting "love-hate" relationships of the period. This relationship appears to have been directly tied to Anno's theft of Agilolf.

The *Triumphus Remacii* claims that Anno's desire to control Malmedy and stake claims to Agilolf began when he visited the monastery in 1061. The account presents a very negative image of Anno, describing him as a powerhungry man who violently tore the young king away from his mother in his attempt to subvert the powers of the realm.⁶⁴ He was "a man of great industry and a harsh temperament."⁶⁵ But believing they could use his support, the monks of Malmedy invited him to their house. While at Malmedy, Anno was shown the body of Agilolf, whom the monks claimed was first the abbot of *Stavelot* and only later the archbishop of Cologne. The *Triumphus* author explains that Anno (probably recognizing the importance of gaining control of a former archbishop) immediately asked the abbot of Stavelot if he could take the relics to Cologne. The monks apparently felt that this was a disturbing and "depraved" idea, and refused his request. The monks were also vexed by Anno's tone, for he behaved "as if the place were already under his control."⁶⁶

Anno's last major gain from his time as regent came on 1 August 1065, when Henry gave him control of Malmedy, Inda, and Vilich. These grants were part of a general trend; between 1058 and 1065, fifteen royal houses had been given away to church figures. This great devolution of royal

property has been identified as one of the hallmarks of the regency, and lasted only through the first few months of Henry's majority.⁶⁷ Malmedy accepted Anno's seizure, believing it would aid them in their attempt to become independent of Stavelot. The monks of Malmedy went to an assembly at Trier where they placed themselves as a separate entity in the hands of the archbishop of Cologne.⁶⁸ One of Anno's officers was chosen as Malmedy's administrator, and an abbot from Brauweiler (also in Cologne's diocese) was established as abbot.⁶⁹

The monks of Malmedy might initially have welcomed archiepiscopal oversight as a way to ensure their separation from Stavelot, but it appears that at least some members of their community might have been willing, and perhaps eager, to free themselves from Anno's personal control. This would have been made easier by the fact that by 1071, Anno had lost favor with Henry, alienated the pope, and earned the enmity of local religious figures, including Theoderic, abbot of Stavelot, who successfully reclaimed Malmedy in that year. After his loss of Malmedy, Anno redirected his efforts to monastic reform, stepping out of the political sphere.⁷⁰ The relevance of Malmedy to Anno's prestige and the reason that the monks of Malmedy might have ultimately resented his intervention both seem to lie in Anno's theft of Agilolf's relics.

Anno claimed Agilolf's relics despite Stavelot's refusal, and the translation of the saint most likely took place on 9 July 1062.⁷¹ Although the *Passio* does not include a discussion of the translation, the other major work attributed to the same author tells of the theft of the saint. The *Translatio S. Quirini's* account of the translation is bitter, and the theft seems, in Levison's words, to be a "fresh wound."⁷² The author, slipping into the first person, writes, "because [Agilolf] was taken away from us and brought to someone else, consequently we believe it is better to remain silent [about certain matters]."⁷³ In this work, the monk of Malmedy not only briefly summarizes Agilolf's life and martyrdom, but also, as he did in the *Passio*, emphasizes the importance of the local landscape: "*at Amblève* he was crowned a martyr, and *there* was his burial site, amongst us, *there* where he had taken up the name and tasks of abbot, and *where God willed [him to be]*."⁷⁴

The *Triumphus Remacii* also criticizes Anno and bemoans the translation. Anno's biography, the *Vita Annonis*, written around 1100, presents a different view. This source praises Anno and the translation: "he rejoiced in the restoration of the limbs of the martyr and bishop Agilolf to the city of Cologne, which had long been deprived of his body. Having precipitously seized the body from Malmedy, he transferred it to his own monastery that is *ad Gradus*, with a great procession of the rejoicing city."⁷⁵ Even though this account celebrates the translation, it includes a note of awareness that Anno may have acted inappropriately, even though the results were for the good.⁷⁶

Anno was a notorious relic thief, and Geary notes that he "was described

as constantly eager in acquiring and honoring the relics of saints.” Around 1069, Anno bribed a guard in a church in Rome and stole the relics of Sts. Innocent and Vitalis.⁷⁷ Jonathan Rotundo-McCord described the bishop’s deliberate “practice of seizing notable corpses and interring them in a prominent place.” Within a few short years, Anno stole three different bodies (Agilolf being the first) and placed them in St. Mary’s *ad gradus* in Cologne “as symbols of triumph over his rivals, as assertions of political control in the Rhineland, and as indirect warnings to the king to respect the archbishop’s prestige and influence.”⁷⁸ Yet these thefts were not straightforward—two of them were not saints.

Rotundo-McCord claimed that Anno stole Agilolf not as a religious act, but as a political one: “His reinternment of the saint was not so much a case of ‘sacred theft’ to bring supernatural power in the form of especially valuable relics to his new foundation, as rather a symbolic statement of the victory he intended to win in his struggle with the abbey of Stavelot.” The two other bodies Anno stole, both members of the Ezzonid family, were similarly politically charged. The Ezzonids were long Henry’s political rivals, the “elevation” of these enemies (one quite literally a traitor to the realm) was directed at Henry IV as “a token of personal resentment.”⁷⁹ As he argued, by choosing to put the bodies in St. Mary’s, “a reception church associated with royal coronation (and hence, in a way, king-making) Anno targeted Henry IV as the object of that defiance in an especially pointed way.”⁸⁰

Although Rotundo-McCord focused a great deal of attention on the theft of Agilolf, he did not discuss the *Passio*. Yet the author of the *Passio* does engage with the idea of linking Agilolf with king-making, since he associates the saint directly with one of the battles that ensured the crowning of Charles Martel. Instead of reinforcing Anno’s position, the author of the *Passio* may have been undermining it by associating the king with the saint and the saint with the local landscape of Malmedy instead of with Cologne. By ordering the translation of Agilolf’s relics to Cologne, Anno was asserting his own power and the primacy of Cologne, both practically and symbolically. By claiming Agilolf’s relics, Anno was prioritizing Agilolf the bishop of Cologne over Agilolf the abbot. In contrast to this, the author of the *Passio* used several structural and contextual devices to give primacy to Agilolf the martyr and abbot of Malmedy.

By creatively reconceptualizing the legend of Agilolf’s life and death as intimately tied to the local landscape, the author of the *Passio* creates a remarkable protest piece. He actively writes against the forced translation of Agilolf’s relics, and emphasizes the importance of Malmedy. An early passage of the *Passio* describes Agilolf’s departure from Cologne’s urban environment; the saint was “burning with the desire of seeing his monastery” and “he made the trip through the Ardennes gladly.”⁸¹ Malmedy’s forested landscape thus becomes part of the saint’s personal

history and emotional identity.

This personal bond with Malmedy culminates in Agilolf's death, when the author lovingly describes the local forest. Then, after the martyrdom, it is the crowd of faithful who had come to Malmedy to celebrate Easter who find his body. As in the Rogation Days story, the local community is highlighted; people from the surrounding fields and villages went to the Amblève and "saw on the earth the holy body lying on the soil."⁸² The words used for "ground" further link Agilolf with the particular space: *humus* implies burial soil and a specific patch of earth, and *gleba*, a lump of earth or soil, is also an intimate, agricultural, and specific word. The choice of terms that imply soil and not just ground (such as *terra*) draws attention to the particular physical location. The ground where Agilolf died is deeply integrated into the *Passio*, and becomes the site of many miracles.

By emphasizing the site of the saint's death rather than the location of his body (which is much more common in hagiography), the author calls attention to Malmedy and its surroundings. In part, it is the prominence of Malmedy (rather than Cologne) in the narrative that led Levison to argue that the body of the saint had not yet been translated when the *Passio* was written. He also noted that though the *Translatio Quirini* points out the translation of the saint to Cologne, the *Passio* does not mention it explicitly. Levison also uses this to suggest that the *Passio* might have been written as early as 972, or that it might have been related to Poppo's reform efforts (1020–48). He writes that on the other hand, "the *Translatio* speaks with sadness about the fact that Agilolf's remains were brought away from Malmedy... it was therefore written after 1062. In contrast to this is the *Passio*, which from beginning to end (and it is remarkable that this has yet to be noticed) establishes that Agilolf's body is still at Malmedy.... not a single word points to the translation to Cologne."⁸³ Levison was right in pointing out this notable silence. There is, indeed, no mention of the relics being moved to Cologne.

The *Passio* does mention Agilolf's entombment at Malmedy, and several miracles occur in front of the tomb and in the presence of the monks and other local witnesses. But the miracles that occur at the saint's tomb do not necessarily reflect an eleventh-century world in which the saint is still at Malmedy. Instead, the key narrative time in which Agilolf's body is described as being (possibly) buried at Malmedy is in the 700s, when Charles entered "the church that contained the tomb of the aforementioned martyr, Agilolf." Another miracle shifts our focus away from Agilolf's body and tomb as the site of healing by first showing that Malmedy still (even without Agilolf?) had other relics. A woman was healed when she prayed in front of Agilolf's tomb, but we are also told that at the time of the miracle, "A monk named Hugo was at the altar—where there is not a small portion of the true cross (*lignus dominici*) and the ashes (*cineres*) of other martyrs."⁸⁴ Healed, the woman rose from the ground where she had been lying in supplication "and

placed a silver necklace that had been hanging from her neck on the altar as a sign of her joy.” The author then exclaims that “I believe, if there had been as much weight of gold at hand as there are leaves on trees, she would have gathered all of it together for God and for the holy martyr.”⁸⁵

This comment continues to draw attention away from the martyr’s tomb (which by that point was possibly empty) and toward the altar and toward the trees and landscape of the Ardennes. The very next miracle further suggests this, as the author immediately shifts focus to the specific site of Agilolf’s death in the forest. He reminds us that the site had lamentably “until today” and the writing of this account, “fallen from memory.” This is the only miracle story that mentions the contemporary present, and it is clear that the author wants the audience to refocus their attention on this site. He links the place (which, unlike the relics, can never leave Malmedy) to devotion, healing, and changelessness.

So, even though he does not explicitly discuss the saint’s relocation to Cologne, the monk of Malmedy sets up a world where the saint had once been and should be at Malmedy. As he points out in his other work (I, with the majority of other scholars, believe him to also be the author of the *Translatio Quirini*),⁸⁶ on certain issues “we believe it is better to remain silent” than to speak. The absence of Anno and his translation of Agilolf to Cologne, and indeed of any references to Cologne at all in the later portions of the *Passio*, might be deliberate silences, an argument *ex silencio* against the translation. Equally noteworthy is that nothing in the account suggests that Agilolf was *still* at Malmedy when the source was penned. Recall that charters from Stavelot actively draw attention to the continual presence of Remacle, “quietly resting” in his tomb; if this story was written before the translation, why was Agilolf not a presence in his own stories?

The *Passio* seems to use a sense of place and holy space not to praise the burial site, but to reclaim the body and the cult. The *Passio* does this not only by praising Malmedy, but also by deliberately setting it against Cologne. After Agilolf’s death, the transfer of Agilolf’s identity to Malmedy is emphasized both by miracles and by the words of lament created for the grievers: “Oh! Cologne is widowed of her pastor, whose blood dyes the soil of the Ardennes.”⁸⁷ By emphasizing the fact that Cologne lost their pastor, and that the Ardennes gained a martyr, the author of the *Passio* made a specific claim that Malmedy had more right to the saint than did Cologne. By adding to this the claim that Charles Martel himself had ordered the saint to abandon Cologne, the author linked imperial will to Agilolf’s association with Malmedy. This and the subsequent victory at the Battle of the Amblève seem to be specifically designed to co-opt imperial favor, and suggest that the monk of Malmedy wished for the emperor to associate Agilolf not only with Malmedy, but with Malmedy *instead of* Cologne. This suggests that the *Passio*, like the *Triumphus*, was intended to convince Henry IV to rule in favor of removing Malmedy from Anno’s control.

One of the main reasons that the *Passio* has been relatively ignored by scholars is that Levison (whose judgments bear much authority) thought that it was a completely fabricated attempt to invent a past for an unknown local saint. He ultimately dismisses the work as a fabulous account that merely cobbled together inventive passages from other sources. However, he did not attempt to explore the meaning of the deliberate changes to these earlier sources that the author of the *Passio* made, instead suggesting that all “mistakes” such as the epithet of “king” applied to Charles Martel are “proof of [the author’s] meager knowledge of history” (itself on the surface unlikely given Poppo’s reform efforts and Stavelot-Malmedy’s prime position in the region’s monastic community).⁸⁸ Levison believed that the heavy borrowing and the historical mistakes (which, as I have argued above, appear to be quite deliberate reimaginings of historic events) undermine the value of the *Passio*, and show it to be merely an unsupported “fantasy building.”⁸⁹

Levison was right; the *Passio* is quite fantastic, and does contain marvels and miracles that might stretch not only our credulity, but also that of medieval readers. However, the author was not a feeble copyist grafting bits of old stories together, not fully understanding the works he was reading. His extensive use of classical and medieval sources was deliberate and careful. He developed and constructed his borrowings in ways that created new stories and new internal architectures of intent and rhetoric. An author who took such care not only to allude to Horace and Ovid, but also to disassemble and reconstruct the older sources on the Battle of the Amblève and combine them with the accounts of Fredegund’s forest army, and to do so in such a way that a distinct narrative moment is created, must have had a purpose and intent. The skill that the author shows in manipulating older literary sources suggests that, in the case of Agilolf’s translation, he might have been aware enough of his own rhetoric to have considered a deliberate silence as protest enough.

It is also worth pointing out that the author’s emphasis on Malmedy not only downplays the importance of Cologne, but also of Stavelot. Anno’s removal of Agilolf’s relics was contemporaneous to the greatest period of conflict between Stavelot and Malmedy. The struggle between the houses continued until May 1071, when Henry restored Malmedy to Stavelot, but not Agilolf to Malmedy.

The involvement of the emperor in this conflict ties the two political goals of the rewritten narrative together. The author of the *Passio* wrote during an age of conflict and propaganda, and knew the power of linking miracle-working saints directly to imperial interests. By adopting the same literary weapons used by other hagiographers and by other members of his own community, the monk was making a powerful statement against Anno’s theft of the relics and in favor of imperial support for the once-rebellious monastery. This provides a possible explanation for the *Passio* author’s unusual and fantastic story about Agilolf, Charles Martel, and the fighting

forest of the Amblève.

In a 1952 article, Jacques Stiennon also argued that the *Passio*'s ahistorical commentary and use of multiple sources might have had a deeper underlying purpose.⁹⁰ He proposed another possible interpretation of some of the *Passio*'s details: the *Passio* was written before Agilolf's translation, under the direction of Anno, by a monk of Malmedy who supported the archbishop's claims to the saint and to the monastery. Like me, Stiennon saw the *Passio* as a textual weapon used in the brewing jurisdictional conflict. Stiennon also attempted to assess why the references to Charles Martel are erroneous, arguing that this appeal to the imperial house was intended to sway Henry IV's ruling.⁹¹ However, Stiennon did not explain why, if this piece were commissioned by Anno, he is not mentioned and Cologne is marginalized. He also failed to address the probability that the author of the *Passio* was the same person who wrote the *Translatio S. Quirini*, in which Anno's role in the translation of Agilolf is explicitly condemned.

Unfortunately, it seems the author's exact identity and political affiliation will remain unknown. Yet it is clear that, whether the piece was composed to oppose or to support Anno, the author used the forest to bind religious and secular conflicts together and hoped to use hagiography to influence their outcomes. The forest battle from the *Passio* and the Rogation Days miracle both show how the monks of Stavelot and Malmedy could actively revise and reinterpret history, and how the local landscape became a part of that process. This use of religious narrative to alter the balance of power in a conflict is not unusual. Monks became involved in secular conflicts, often related to their control of forests and woodlands. Although they were frequently able to assert their control of written records and property deeds to suppress or resolve conflict through legal channels, at times the monks turned to their religious identity.

Through miracle stories, the monks used the power and judgment of the saints to redress failures of justice, to establish monastic control when no other power or system was working, and to establish the monastic presence on the political and natural landscape. The natural world was a part of this process. Environmental imagination extends beyond the literary world, encouraging writers to use nature and landscape not just as a stage for human events, but (in this case literally) also as an agent and weapon in human conflicts. The process began with the earliest foundation stories, and as monastic power expanded and was challenged by bishops, kings, and local peasants alike, the monks wielded the powers of narrative and memory to show that they and their saints were privy to a special kind of religious authority over the natural world. This gave their control over landscapes a kind of permanence, and slowly, the monks of Stavelot-Malmedy claimed the Ardennes as "the lands of St. Remacle."

Chapter 5

landscape history with intensive use of the surviving Anglo-Saxon charters to understand political boundaries and visible landscape features.² With the birth of modern ecology and developments in landscape archaeology, these themes then found expression in ecological reconstructions of landscapes at both a micro- and macrolevel. Forest historians have similarly worked to identify where forests were, what their vegetative history was, and the characteristics of “paleo-landscapes.”³

Investigating a landscape involves more than ecological reconstructions, because landscapes were composed of more than trees, rivers, and fields, and furrows. As Simon Schama demonstrated in *Landscape and Memory*, places can become imbued with cultural meaning and embedded in history, and thus be richer than the sum of their natural features. “Landscape,” he wrote, “is the work of the mind. Its scenery is built up as much from strata of memory as from layers of rock.”⁴ “For writers of cultural landscape studies,” Paul Groth points out, “*Landscape* denotes the intersection of people and place: a social group and its spaces, particularly the spaces to which the group belongs and from which its members derive some part of their shared identity and meaning.”⁵

Like us, medieval people could read many different meanings into their local surroundings. Places and territories were owned by individuals and institutions, and secular power could be visibly marked. As the discussion of vocabulary in [Chapter 1](#) shows, both monastic and political agents could attempt to make medieval landscapes “legible”—but monastic leaders had an extra ability. They could also make landscapes holy. Monastic territories were also owned by saints, whose power was both visible and invisible.⁶ The monks of Stavelot and Malmedy found ways of marking the invisible power of God and the saints in the visible world; they created religious landmarks and recorded places where the saints had acted both in their lives and after their deaths. Then, through stories, buildings, and even religious art, they connected this spiritual power with the physical world, creating a tangible and recognizable religious landscape that they and the local communities interacted with on a daily basis. This chapter looks at how the monks of the Ardennes structured their hagiographical narratives to support and explain conversion, to spread their religious authority across the political and economic landscape, and thereby to further connect their control of resources, land, and wealth to their religious identity and values.

Miracle stories were of course intended to teach about exemplary holiness, provide models of good behavior, and to teach abstract values. But medieval Christianity was in many ways a *tangible* religion, and a secondary and often more immediate goal of these collections was to draw attention to the monastery or church that held the body or relics of the saint. To further cement the ties between wealth and spirituality and to draw people to the monasteries, the monks built and continuously renovated an impressive religious infrastructure of monasteries and churches, and packed them with

shrines, altars, candles, and artworks. They filled their churches with the smells of incense, wax, and tallow, and with the sounds of prayers and music. They built and planned these holy spaces to use these sights, smells, and sounds to their advantage, in ways that encouraged people to come and *experience* the religion, drawing them to the monasteries. By the year 1000, one contemporary observer wrote, “it was as if the whole world were shaking itself, shrugging off the past, and swathing itself all over in a shining mantle of churches.”⁷ Though this material abundance would be the focus of many critiques by the end of the 1100s, many, including Peter the Venerable, saw this as a revitalization: “the ardor of monastic religion, which at one time had grown cold, grew warm again by the example and zeal of these men. Gaul, Germany, and even Britain ... are full of monasteries either newly founded by them or restored from their earlier decline.”⁸

The monks not only built and rebuilt monasteries throughout the Central Middle Ages, they also told stories about those spaces, and about the natural world that surrounded them. Such stories, though probably based in part on local lore and oral tradition, survive because monks decided to commit them to writing. These collections, though often compiled over several generations, were deliberately selected and arranged in a way that would glorify the saints who performed the miracles. This chapter returns to the religious narratives of the Ardennes, this time treating them as cohesive, constructed sources, and looking for how the total collections of stories work to tie religion to space, and to bind Stavelot-Malmedy’s saints directly to the Ardennes.

The monks transformed meadows, forests, and fountains into religious landscapes by adding visible Christian features such as crosses and shrines and by telling stories that linked all of this to local saints and to miracles. They went to great lengths to fill the surrounding territories with places that people would associate not only with labor and the economy, but also with miracles of healing, religious festivals, and stories of saintly intervention. A stream could become not only a source of fresh water and a place of labor and industry, but also a place where religious lessons were recalled and retold. A tree or a mountain could serve as both a boundary marker and as a memorial of religious devotion. By consciously connecting religion to the local landscape, the monks labored to tie themselves and their saints to the local, daily experiences of the people of the Ardennes.

In looking for uses of place and landscape in these cult sources, I am building on many existing studies on the goals and practices of saints’ cults. In his study on the Late Antique origins of the practice, Peter Brown demonstrated how the cult of saints connected the living and the dead, and the many ways that this connection was mediated through space and place. The tombs of “the very special dead” anchored communities, connected people to the divine, and provided tangible points through which Christian identity could be marked and made visible. By the 600s, he notes, we see “a

Mediterranean landscape covered, in its most settled parts, with a grid of shrines.”⁹ This idea of the mapping out of sacred points is more thoroughly explored by Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell in their discussion of the “geography of religion.” They, however, emphasize the fragmented nature of the religious landscape, and the localized “embedding of cult in the microregional landscape and the web of connectivity.”¹⁰ Where Brown gives an impression of a slowly growing fixity, their emphasis is on the smaller religious landscapes, and on the geography of travel, pilgrimage, and exchange that connected those landscapes and made them fluid.

The fluidity of the early medieval Christian landscape and the connections between exchange, travel, and sacred topography is also a part of Geary’s interpretation of the *furta sacra* narratives. The very nature of the theft narratives show that a saint’s geographic context was mutable, and that bringing saints to new places inscribed those new places with new spiritual identities. Thus, translations, tours, and thefts of relics changed the relationship between space and sanctity. The monks of Stavelot-Malmedy were both the beneficiaries and the victims of this; Agilolf was removed from his context (and the author of the *Passio* worked hard to reassociate him with Malmedy), but Remacle remained connected to Stavelot while at the same time gradually becoming associated with other places and properties, thereby tying those places directly to Stavelot’s religious landscape.

Gregory of Tours and the cult of St. Martin provide valuable comparative examples. Raymond Van Dam’s work on Late Antique Gaul explores how landscape, topography, and space played a role in the development of St. Martin’s cult. Using miracle stories to track the geographic origins of pilgrims, Van Dam shows the drawing power of St. Martin’s church complex outside of Tours, or “Martinopolis.” He then shows how the religious power of Martin was extended beyond Martinopolis through the creation of multiple smaller shrines, through written and oral stories about miracles and pilgrimage, and through the movement of relics. These relics, he notes, included “bits of the ground of the saint’s church, thereby almost literally recreating the sacred topography of Tours elsewhere.”¹¹ Gregory and other bishops worked to expand and promote the cult and to spread Martin’s influence and reputation, though in spite of this, “even the most prominent cult in early Merovingian Gaul was largely a local, diocesan cult.”¹²

Karine Uge’s work on Flanders follows up on this idea that cults were local by examining how hagiographical production developed around specific historical contexts. She investigated two Flemish monasteries, Saint-Bertin and Saint-Rictrude, tracing the adaptation and evolution of narrative accounts, seeking in the alterations the motives for their composition. Ultimately, she concludes that Saint-Bertin “selectively preserved, used and altered its archives and historiographic narratives and created new ones so as to make its past useful for present needs.”¹³ As an example, she points to

the *Vita Rictrudis*, which the monks changed over time; by the eleventh century, “the core of the legend itself was considerably altered in order to sacralize the community’s landholding and to protect it from predatory lay neighbours.”¹⁴

Not only did different communities have their own particular saints, they also had their own particular relationships with regional saints like Martin. Sharon Farmer has examined how three different monastic communities interacted with St. Martin, and how his legends and identity changed as each community integrated him into their own context.¹⁵ As part of her study of emotional history, Barbara Rosenwein also turned to Gregory’s Tours materials. Her questions primarily focus on how space and emotion are connected, and she looks for moments of liminality and discussions of how spaces are experienced. Of particular interest for my purposes is her idea that specific places (such as saint’s tombs) can be seen as having “circles” of emotion radiating from them. This is reminiscent of her earlier work on immunities, protective zones also radiating out from monastic sites. She also ties these emotional circles to the ways that individual spaces can become sacralized, describing one cell as positioned “directly—and confrontationally—within a landscape both real and figurative.” She continues to note that this religious landscape also included competition with previous ones, since Gregory describes the nearby “great temple (*delubrum*) where on a very high column an image of Mars and Mercury was worshipped.”¹⁶ This early Christian landscape then expanded, as places, communities, and saints were bound together, “anchored to certain points. But ... these points radiated and created sacred space into and out of which people moved. Sometimes this space was clearly bounded ... and at other times it shaded off gradually into profane space.”¹⁷

Creating a Landscape of Conversion

The foundation of the monasteries of Stavelot and Malmedy was a part of a centuries-long process by which monastic leaders converted the residents of the Ardennes to Christianity and integrated the territory into the Christianized landscape. The Romans had introduced Christianity to the central Ardennes, and their settlement patterns shaped the church’s administrative structure. Despite some continuity under the earliest Franks, the widespread Christianization of the Ardennes did not occur until the seventh century.¹⁸ A cadre of individual monk-bishops led this Christianization movement, centered on monasteries. Between 625 and 725, these men founded forty-six monasteries in the area that is now Belgium, often built on earlier pagan cult sites.¹⁹

The early medieval monks of Stavelot and Malmedy used practical tactics, political connections, and their control over narrative sources to

construct a “landscape of conversion,” a series of places that were associated with a new, Christian, and particularly, monastic identity. This is reflected in the narrative sources that emphasize the success of their foundation, their authority over the local environment, and a mythology of the religious conversion of the local populace. The story of Stavelot-Malmedy’s religious landscape begins around 650, when Remacle created the first religious landmark, a fountain that would be known as the Fons Remacli.²⁰ This started a process through which the monks inscribed their own identity onto the preexisting physical, social, and religious landscapes.

From its opening passages, the *Vita Remacli* closely associates the early evangelization efforts with the physical environment and with territoriality. “In that time,” it notes, “there were, in addition to the forts and armed places, forty very large cities, each one well-populated and famous. Two of them were *metropoles*: Bordeaux and Berry. St. Austregilisius was the bishop in Berry, and blessed Sulpitius was his archdeacon, and his successor in the episcopacy.”²¹ The good word was spread throughout Gaul, but was “not confined only to neighboring peoples, but also indeed to those people who are said to be beyond Sarmatia and who border the Icy sea, and who inhabit the Fortunate Isles.”²² In the body of the *vita*, Heriger picked up on this theme, adding that in those “happy times,” Christianity was growing in importance, “so that today nothing that is part of the church can be found within the limits of the kingdom that was not [first] made bright in the era of the saintly patron.”²³ His description of the conversion of the local communities continues with a discussion of Remacle’s role as the founder and leader of many monasteries. Here, the focus moves from large-scale images of geographic dominion to smaller metaphors, stories, and miracles that invoke the saint’s control of the natural world.

Legends from Stavelot and Malmedy surrounding the Fons Remacli, a spring that Remacle harnessed and controlled, show how the monks interacted with preexisting communities and how they were able to convert nature itself as part of their mission to gain control of the souls of the region. During these early days, Remacle visited the area along the Warche River, where he found signs of the former Germano-Roman cult practices. The *vita* reports that the local population had been “bound up by idolatry” and that signs of their pagan practices were still present, including effigies and mysterious “stones of Diana” (associated with the Gallo-Roman hybrid Diana of the Ardennes) and a fountain that was “fit for human purposes but polluted by pagan error” and subject to “demonic infestation.”²⁴

Remacle, recognizing both the utility and the symbolic power of this water source, exorcized the site. He freed the place of evil pagan influences by making the sign of the cross over them and invoking Christ’s name. The demonic infestation appears to have been represented by the drying up of the fountain, because the biographer notes that after Remacle had made the sign of the cross, water once again flowed from the fountain, drop by drop.

Remacle then took care to make the resource more useful and stable. He made a leaded pipe for the fountain, causing water to gush forth, converting the wild stream to a managed resource. Christian sacred landscapes, though rooted in the natural world, often involved human (or divine) manipulation and tending of nature, and the story of Remacle's actions exemplifies what John Howe has described as the "firm" medieval belief "that even a *locus amoenus* could be improved."²⁵

One of the reasons that stories like this endure is that they gave monks a way of explaining and memorializing conversion, a process that in reality is often slow and invisible, connecting it to visible sites and to a specific historic moment. But creating these initial religious landmarks was only the first step; the monks had to continuously create other religious landmarks and to build churches and shrines to give visible expression to their religious authority. Significantly, they did so even as they worked to establish secular boundaries for their territories, a process that was neither separate from nor inconsistent with their religious identity.

According to Heriger's later account (ca. 1000) of the establishment of Remacle's fountain, the saint marked monastic control of the landscape in two other ways: he named it and he put down a permanent memorial. Naming is powerful, and according to Heriger's account, in order to signify the site's conversion, Remacle decided that the monastery should be named *Malmundarium* because of the fact that it had been freed from evil spirits and thus transformed: "*mal* orum spirituum infestatione *mundaverat*."²⁶ This is also the point at which he ties Stavelot's name to the idea of a "stable for souls," explaining conversion within a pastoral (rather than aggressive) frame. Remacle also set up a stone cross and built an oratory and dwellings for the monks there, marking the presence of the Christian group. Such physical landmarks were accompanied by stories and texts that confirmed the conversion.

Miracles describe the powers of the fountain and of other water that Remacle had in some way blessed or converted, ensuring that it became a clear point on the religious landscape, revealed and controlled by the saint and the monks. The *vita Remacii* reports, for example, that Remacle later appeared in a vision, revealing a sanctified space that was "a place that was always quiet" and contained a fountain "fit for human purposes." Heriger noted that this was a place where the monks could find spiritual rejuvenation: if someone "rests his body in that place, and is there in spirit as well," he wrote, "the signs still appear to innumerable believers."²⁷ One woman's sight was restored when she washed her eyes in and drank from the fountain.²⁸ Another woman was exorcized with its water while visiting the monastery, and a local man accused of misdeeds who fell sick in the monastery was healed by drinking from Remacle's chalice. After drinking from the saint's cup, the man's "habits changed" and he stopped his misdeeds.²⁹ These stories also serve as a reminder of the monks' role in

controlling water. Though the blind woman accessed the spring itself, the other examples divorce the power of Remacle's water from the natural site and associate it with the monks and the interior of the monastery, and to controlled access.

Remacle's fountain is by no means unusual. Water was a powerful symbolic force in the Christian Middle Ages, and stories of saints and holy men controlling water and other forces of nature abound. That does not, however, lessen the significance of this story. On the contrary, this story, set in their own landscape, remained an active part of the monasteries' self-identity, and the monks told and retold this story of Remacle's taming of nature throughout the centuries.

According to legend, Remacle used lead to signify the monastic conversion of the Ardennes. Wibald, some five hundred years later, used gold. In 1135, he commissioned a giant golden retable (or a decorative backdrop for an altarpiece) for the church at Stavelot. This golden, jewel-encrusted altarpiece surrounded a house reliquary containing Remacle's relics. Though it no longer survives, much is known about its appearance. It was almost nine feet high and was covered with scenes from the life of Remacle and the foundation of the monasteries.³⁰ It showed scenes from Remacle's youth, his meetings with famous religious figures, his investiture as bishop, and, like the earlier, written accounts that Wibald drew upon, depicts Sigibert's role in the foundation.

The retable has been thoroughly analyzed by Susanne Wittekind, who has made a strong argument that its programmatic vision of the foundation should be treated as Wibald's own, unique representation of the foundational legend—as a “Bildvita.”³¹ It continued earlier monastic efforts to closely connect the foundation with royal protection and privilege. Sigibert was of course prominent, as he was the initial royal patron. However, the picture also featured Grimoald, the mayor of the palace (continuing the monastic desire to connect the houses' history to the Carolingians). It also presented the other witnesses, and they and their names appear on the retable in the same order as is found in the charters; Wittekind noted that this image therefore “takes over the formulaic exactitude of the charter.”³² Since other scenes found on the retable clearly reflect the literary sources, this artwork continues to show how the monks of Stavelot-Malmedy blurred the boundaries between their sources.

The images of foundation also contained familiar symbols that represented both the relative “environments” of the key figures and the donation of the *forestis* to the monasteries. King Sigibert was shown seated inside of a building (possibly a throne room), holding his symbols of office; Remacle, on the other hand, was shown standing outdoors and carrying his episcopal staff. Connecting the secular space with the slightly separated religious space, Sigibert reached out to hand Remacle a budding stick—much as Count Warner had used a tree branch as a physical symbol of property

exchange when he donated a “large amount of woods” to the monastery.³³ Property transactions created social bonds; the royal donation connected the monarch and the saint, and the symbolism of the branch bridged secular and spiritual spaces and concerns.

The scenes depicting the founding of Stavelot and of Malmedy revisit the stories of the monks’ initial efforts at conversion, featuring the clearing of the forest and the Christianization of the area. Following the two *vitae*, Wibald’s retable showed Malmedy as the first foundation, but, as Wittekind points out, the scenes were visually separated, and the picture of Stavelot was next to the scene showing Remacle’s burial.³⁴ This ordering indicates Stavelot’s supremacy, reminding the observer not only of Remacle’s alleged preference for Stavelot, but also that Stavelot (and the retable) housed the relics of the saint.

Both scenes emphasized the construction of new buildings in the middle of the forest, the clearing of that forest, and the establishment of Christian features on a pagan landscape. The Malmedy panel was dominated by the clearing of the forest and the construction of the monastery. One monk knelt on the roof of the monastery, surrounded by the words “*Malmundarium templum S. Petri*.” Another monk held a hammer, with which he drove a cross into the ground above a fallen “*Simulachra ara Diane*.” The pagan symbols found in Heriger’s *vita* appear on the retable as a naked, two-headed female figure, two cart wheels, and a small animal.³⁵ The statue of Diana was upside down on the ground underneath the cross. Remacle blessed the new cross, with a stream or fountain flowing by his feet, under the cross.

Beside the nearly completed monastery of the Malmedy panel, two men (likely monks) were in the process of felling tall, leafy trees. Wittekind discussed the trees in this panel, associating the clearing of the forest with Remacle’s missionary work to “bring order and light to the darkness.” She argued that in the Malmedy panel the only trees being felled were the “fruitless” or barren ones (no fruit is depicted, but the trees are leafy), which were then used for the building of the church.³⁶ Although several of Stavelot’s sources do report that infertile trees should be chopped down at the roots, it is unlikely that a metaphor of a church built on infertility would appeal to the monks, especially given the striking images of monks as fertile trees and of natural abundance found throughout their writings.³⁷ It is also worth pointing out that the lack of fruit on the trees may in fact be as simple as a practical recognition that lumber did not often come from nut- or fruit-bearing trees.

The retable, like Wibald’s writings, allowed trees to function as flexible metaphors—representing both the wilderness and paradise. The notion that these images of trees can and should be read in part as allegory is suggested by the appearance of the “tree of life” and the “tree of knowledge” on the retable’s top panel. These two trees encapsulate the conflicting nature of

monastic attitudes toward forests. As Schama pointed out in his discussion of medieval Christianity's relationship with tree cults, the tree of life and the tree of knowledge are Edenic icons that "from the very beginning ... are planted together as necessary opposites."³⁸ And Wibald, who commissioned this work, had also received a piece of the ultimate tree of life: the relic of the true Cross. This conversion of the tree of life into the cross-as-tree is discussed in an Anglo-Saxon context by Della Hooke, who adds that stone crosses, too, take on the role of tree in many medieval contexts.³⁹

In his discussion of the retable's arborial images, Pierre Koumoth argued that they were representative of the Christian destruction of pagan groves and other natural sites. He extended the interpretation of the fountain as a pagan site to the trees, arguing that the clearing of the forest near Malmedy was meant to represent the felling of pagan trees. This interpretation resonates with Lynn White's view of a destructive early Christianity, and also with Remensnyder's observation that stories in the early Middle Ages commonly emphasized the founding of monasteries and Christian sites on earlier, pagan sites. Many foundation accounts do feature similar motifs in which religious figures convert the landscape.⁴⁰ However, when we look carefully at the monastery as a whole, it is clear that for Stavelot there is no textual evidence of any association of trees with paganism. Furthermore, although Koumoth argued that its program was still aimed at impressing newly converted pagans, by the 1100s, the Ardennes were firmly Christianized.⁴¹ The clearing of the forest more likely represented the taming of the wilderness than any explicit clearing of pagan groves. Instead the monks seem to link this process with water, and Wibald's re-creation of Heriger's story about Remacle's fountain is also evidence for the endurance of that story. In the twelfth century, the stories that tied the seventh-century foundation and the establishment of Christianity closely with control of the natural world were still a vivid part of monastic memory and imagination.

Whereas Malmedy was nearly complete, the building of Stavelot was shown in full swing. Remacle, holding a book, was again shown as overseeing or giving his blessing to the workers. It is clear that at least two of the workers were monks, as they stood in habit on top of the building, working on one of the church towers, with a pulley to lift stone to the roof. Wittekind suggests, and I agree, that the emphasis on monastic building was deliberate on Wibald's part, since he himself was interested in restoring and rebuilding Stavelot's properties.⁴² This could also reflect the renewed emphasis on the spiritual value of labor that the Cistercian challenge to Benedictinism had brought to the fore of monastic discourse by the 1100s. The inclusion of details of the building process could also be connected to the increasing depiction of architects and technology in the art of the Commercial Revolution.

Another group of laborers was shown clearing the "*saltus Arduene*." One monk cut down a small, waist-high tree, and the man in the center

foreground of the image cut and finished boards. A final man was depicted as climbing a tree, and as no tools were visible in his hands, he might have been gathering fruit or nuts. In addition to the inscription above the trees that read “*saltus Arduenne*,” the “caption” of the panel read “*Quo nemus eruitur stabulaus xro stabilitur*,” or “In which the woods were torn out [and] Stavelot was made stable for Christ.” (The nod to Stavelot’s etymology is itself another reminder that Wibald was drawing on the *vita Remacii*.) This reiterates the flexibility of forest words, as the captions used “*nemus*” and “*saltus*,” seemingly interchangeably. More importantly in this context, it also shows the association between the conversion of the wild landscape into a domestic one and the process of evangelization.

These two panels, though very similar and drawn from the same narrative inspiration, do show slightly different views of the monastic foundation. The Malmedy panel places the conversion of the pagan fountain in the foreground, highlighting the monastic ability to dominate the religious landscape. The Stavelot panel, however, placed the board-maker in the foreground, emphasizing the monastic domestication of the forests and of the agricultural and economic functions of the areas surrounding their new houses. The retable confirms the impression created by the earlier foundational accounts that forests were flexible religious, cultural, and literary symbols.

The altarpiece also makes another statement about the monasteries’ wealth and economic power, since the images were surrounded by a list of all of Stavelot-Malmedy’s major properties: a sort of permanent artistic polyptych. These reflect Wibald’s work around the year 1130 to assemble lists of the properties controlled by each house. Like polyptychs and cartularies, these lists were written representations of monastic claims to control and hold secular power over agricultural, political, and economic landscapes.⁴³ In Bastin’s words, he not only “fixed them down on parchment, which is good. Wibald did even better; he engraved them onto metal.”⁴⁴ This bold statement of economic and political power demonstrates the importance of monastic institutional memory, the power of the symbolic control of the religious landscape, and the fact that these religious landmarks existed alongside more secular boundaries.

Landmarks and boundaries have been central to many discussions of monastic landscapes, which often draw on a combination of landscape history and agricultural history. Sam Turner’s work on early medieval England, *Making a Christian Landscape*, for example, traces how “changes in religious or political ideology, like the conversion of Britain to Christianity, can result in physical changes to the structure of the landscape.” He maps existing and excavated church sites, burial sites, and religious landmarks, connecting ecclesiastical decisions about space to agricultural settlement.⁴⁵ The essays collected in *A Place to Believe In: Locating Medieval Landscapes* add to this landscape approach, turning to literature and art in addition to

landscape archaeology. These essays taken together show how religious ideas could be worked out through interaction with landscapes, and introduce ideas of imagined rather than tangible landscapes.⁴⁶

Roberta Gilchrist's work on Norwich Cathedral combined archaeological approaches with discussions of monastic memory and social power.⁴⁷ She drew heavily on the analysis of building location, access, and traffic control, but extended her analysis beyond architectural layout to explore ideas of hierarchy and liminality within those spaces. Practical and "metaphoric" space combined to create a bounded and defined monastic place. Norwich Cathedral was surrounded by both Roman and medieval urban buildings; Martinopolis had to develop within Tours' urban framework. The religious landscape of Stavelot-Malmedy, however, was not so clearly bounded by preexisting urban constraints. The monks' competitors for control of the landscape were further away and more loosely defined, and so the abbots quickly shifted their focus away from the initial sacralization of their local sites and toward telling stories that helped establish their presence outside the monasteries, in the landscape they were working to convert and control.

Extending the Religious Landscape

This landscape was dotted with sites where the power of the saints was revealed and perpetuated. Landscape conversion is not just "a reinvestment of existing sacred places with new significance.... Instead, we might consider sacred space as a place of and for cultural memory, a place where strata of meanings have been gathered and deposited."⁴⁸ Remensnyder describes a process through which kings chose (or had revealed to them) the sites for monastic foundations. These moments reflected "an irruption of the divine" into the mundane topography. This linking of the monastery to a space or a set of properties, she argues, was associated with the creation of a "historicized topography" that linked historic individuals to the local landscape.⁴⁹ Over the centuries, the bodies of people cured at Remacle's fountain confirmed the conversion of the site and the power of the saint. The monks recorded and refashioned these stories, and used similar cures that took place at Stavelot, at Malmedy, and throughout the surrounding landscape to connect the specific territories controlled by the monastery with the religious power of the saint.

The monasteries became the center point of a new imagining of the landscape as a set of places of Christian religious importance. Despite claims like Notger's about the universalism of early Christianity, the process of connecting the landscape to the new religion was a slow and gradual affair. The initial conversion of waters, cutting of groves, and building of monasteries created Christian sites, but not a Christian landscape. As Brown explains, "having spread, [Christianity] lay around the shrines of the saints

like pools of water on a drying surface.”⁵⁰ To spread, indeed to not disappear, the saints and the monasteries needed to be deliberately nurtured (like, the monks might claim, a *plantatio*).

Sites of conversion came to be associated with a sanctified landscape controlled by both Remacle and the monks of Stavelot-Malmedy. This landscape gradually expanded along with the power and economic reach of the monasteries, especially as the houses grew during the seventh through ninth centuries. The monasteries attracted a steadily growing group of monks, who were often described with natural metaphors invoking abundance. The *vita Remacii* reports that the monks swarmed around Remacle like bees around a hive, and that a “river” (*agmen*) of monks and Christians flowed into the region.⁵¹

Stavelot-Malmedy’s conversion of the landscape began with Remacle’s fountain, but the houses’ cult of saints was not started until his successor Babolenus brought the relics of St. Semetrios to Stavelot in 660. For several centuries afterward, the monks appear to have focused their attentions elsewhere—accumulating properties, establishing relationships with the monarchy, developing their agricultural infrastructure. No evidence of a thriving cult appears until the first half of the 800s, when the *vita prima* and the first book of the *Miracula Remacii* were written and (according to legend) Louis the Pious heard of miracles at Remacle’s shrine. The monastic flight with Remacle’s body after the Viking attacks in 881 is also evidence for some cult developing around Remacle. But it was not until the tenth century that Remacle’s cult expanded dramatically and competitor saints emerged at Malmedy; this process expanded the reach of monastic power and influence, and drew the economic properties that the monks controlled into the Christianized landscape.

On 4 March 1042, Poppo unearthed the ancient tomb of Remacle, calling further attention to Stavelot as the inheritor of Remacle’s relics, and of the importance of the church as the site of the saint’s tomb. For by then, Stavelot was not the only monastic church to claim relics of Remacle. Prüm claimed to have the “vestments” of St. Remacle, and Lierneux reported having the cloak, cap, and sandals of the saint.⁵² Poppo was interested in claiming Remacle fully for his houses, and in using the saint’s cult to bind the two houses closer together under the leadership of Stavelot. Although Malmedy did not have any of Remacle’s relics, Poppo built a crypt at Malmedy called the “Grotto of St. Remacle.”⁵³ The monks of Malmedy possessed the relics of St. Quirin and his companions along with some relics of St. Peter and St. Just (they had been translated during the tenth century), and the body of St. Agilolf (date of translation unknown).

He lavished attention on the houses’ physical infrastructure. He renovated and largely rebuilt the church at Stavelot. The dedication, on 5 June 1040, was a grand affair, attended by Emperor Henry III and other dignitaries. At the ceremony, Henry confirmed Otto II’s decision from

Ingelheim, reinforcing Stavelot's primacy and demonstrating the emperor's support of Poppo's reforms. The new basilica fostered pilgrim traffic and highlighted Remacle's relics.⁵⁴ By developing the infrastructure surrounding the relics of saints, Poppo was participating in a growing contemporary trend. The tenth century had seen a boom in relic cults and the veneration of the saints, and monks and monastic institutions were the leaders in this process. The relics of the saints drew crowds from all walks of life to monasteries, and abbey churches grew in prominence, wealth, and social status, causing a monastic church-building spree.⁵⁵

Wibald also nurtured and expanded religious cult practices, and used the rewards this brought to further Stavelot's spiritual and secular interests. The monks asked him to restore the church at Bovigny and expand Remacle's cult there, since it had been one of the places his body had rested on the Viking-inspired tour of the monastic estates recorded in the *Miracula*.⁵⁶ In 1145, Wibald also added to the reliquary wealth of the monasteries, bringing relics of St. Alexander and many other saints to Stavelot from Rome. The other saints whose relics Wibald procured included St. Agapitus, St. Crispin, St. Maurus, and the 11,000 virgins (whose *passio* was already in Stavelot's library). The inclusion of the 11,000 virgins is particularly interesting given Stavelot's rocky relationship with Cologne. Wibald also acquired such unusual pieces as the stone that Christ stood on when he was baptized, parts of the sponge used in the crucifixion, the stone Christ stood on when ascending to heaven, and the beard of St. Peter. Some of these more unusual relics appear to have been described by Peter the Deacon in his *Liber de Locis Sanctis*, which he sent to Wibald while he was abbot of Monte Cassino.⁵⁷

Regional participation in the feast days drew in new audiences and new patrons, and allowed the monasteries to continue to become the most prominent features in the religious landscape. People came to Stavelot from many of the surrounding villages and towns to honor the saint, participate in masses and festivals, and create extended community networks. The *Miracula Remacii* records a "crowd of people" at the church in Stavelot who witness a miracle, and in another instance note the mass of "*plebes*, who had gathered to see a spectacle and also for Vespers." These "many people of both sexes and all orders" were again witness to a miracle and "gave shouts of praise."⁵⁸ The *Passio Agilolfi* describes a crowd on the Feast of St. John the Baptist as so large that people "flooded into the monastery at Malmedy in such numbers that they could not be counted, and that in all of the streets and crossings, nothing else could be seen."⁵⁹

In addition to creating new religious landmarks, Poppo also commissioned the final stages of the miracle collection. The creation of such narrative sources demonstrated the omnipresence of the saints and the prominence of the monasteries. People encounter the saint throughout the monasteries' farflung territories; they are punished by the saint, have visions, or in some cases are even instructed by neighbors to travel to these

houses and express their devotion.

The *Miracula Remacii*, composed in stages over several generations (ca. 850–1050), contains two books recording many of the miracles that took place at Remacle’s shrine. Many of these are relatively common miracles such as exorcisms and healings of the blind and sick. Earlier editorial decisions and research agendas focused on eliminating such *topoi*, emphasizing the unique, historicized aspects of individual saints.⁶⁰ But as Geary noted, although many medieval cult works repeated stories and were full of *topoi*, “they are nonetheless differentiated in the choice and arrangement of the *topoi*.”⁶¹ Recent scholarship has shifted focus back to the complete works and to the decisions that authors made about how to copy, compile, and accumulate miracles and other hagiographical stories.

Stories circulated along with relics and as part of the process of conversion and the consolidation of monastic identities. In her work on Becket’s miracles, Rachel Koopmans builds on this point, arguing that miracle collections reflect not only the circulation of written stories between monastic communities, but also an oral tradition of storytelling. She reminds historians that “only a tiny percentage of the many stories created and exchanged in the oral world were ever collected in texts.”⁶² There was a whole world of oral stories that were told by monks and non-monks as part of the way they related to each other and to the broader community that we can no longer access. It is also important that the monks had access to the stories because others *chose* to tell them. These “currents of conversation made up a vast, dynamic, and multi-faceted sea of narrative exchange.”⁶³ Miracle collections reflect the appropriation of some of those stories by the monks, and (even if it is invisible to us now) reflect a process of deliberate selection and organization (much like cartularies weed, winnow, and select which of a multitude of legal documents to preserve and remember).

Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn examined how such stories were collected and compiled by Bernard of Angers and other monks of Conques. Beginning around 1020, Bernard accumulated stories from witnesses and archives, and after his death other monks at Conques continued his work. Ashley and Sheingorn point out that this was a long and deliberate process of gathering, writing, rewriting, and editing, and argue that the collection needs to be viewed not as a place to “extract nuggets of ‘facts’” from, but as a “sophisticated literary text.”⁶⁴ As such, though individual miracle stories can of course be studied, they also “analyzed the internal structures of the *Liber*, looking at the ways groups of stories have been meaningfully arranged by various of its authors.”⁶⁵ For example, they note the “centrality of Conques itself to the ideological geography of the miracle stories,” but then point to differences in how this is conveyed first by Bernard and then by his successors, who later “infuse” the *topos* “with a need to retain and buttress territorial authority.”⁶⁶ By looking for such patterns amidst a flurry of stories and *topoi*, and linking these patterns to the goals of cult-building, their work

serves as a model for my discussions of the broader structure and organizational patterns in Stavelot-Malmedy's hagiographical materials.

One noticeable pattern in the *Miracula Remaculi* is that many of the stories emphasize the clear connection of miracles to the physical monasteries and to specific local sites, reinforcing the importance of the saint, the monks, and the monasteries. The first story, which was eliminated in Holder-Egger's MGH edition,⁶⁷ is that of Joseph and the horse (see [Chapter 3](#)), in which the saint reaches out from his monastic seat to act as the regulator of the nearby countryside. Joseph then comes to the monastery in order to be healed publicly, while the monks were singing an office. The importance of the physical church in this process is emphasized when the compiler notes that Joseph's miracle, which took place inside the church at Stavelot, happened at the time "when the structure of the church's altar was being built."⁶⁸

The miracle that immediately follows this involves the fabric of the church itself, as it records the partial collapse of one of the church towers (through the saint's protection, no one was injured). The passage includes a description of part of Stavelot's liturgical space, the sanctity of which was confirmed by a further miracle. According to the compilers, Remacle's tomb emitted "the smell of paradise," which was compared to the burning of thyme: "The odor burst forth and spread through all of the spaces of the church and became universal, and the brothers were unable to explain the manner of this spreading odor."⁶⁹ The presence of remarkable odors was a sign, Brown noted, that "the tombs of the very special dead were exempt from the facts of death ... the deep peace of their sleep before the resurrection shows in their bones."⁷⁰ And indeed, Remacle was described as "resting" in his tomb, which in turn became the site of miracles associated with sleep.

A pair of miracles, included next to each other in the collection, also shows Remacle himself taking an active interest (posthumously) in the proper delivery of agricultural tithes and in making sure that people drawn to the monastery for healing continue their journey and complete the pilgrimage. In the first of these stories, a member of the monastic *familia* named Notherus was "robbed of his sleep by a malicious spirit."⁷¹ Rising in the "silence of night," he was ordered to go and visit St. Remacle's threshold (*limen*), where his earlier health would be restored to him. He hesitated, but finally decided to travel to the monastery when the other residents of the fisc delivered the monks' grain tithe. The importance of delivering tributes to the monastery, in turn reinforcing the monastic control of agriculture, is found in four other miracles from the first book that involve tributes and tithes (1.9, 1.11, 1.12, 1.19).

When Notherus's group had almost reached the monastery, one of their oxen was struck "either by great weariness or some sort of injury," and sat down in one spot, unable to move. Notherus was then instructed by the

exact^{or} of the tithes to stay with the injured ox and to guard it and the cartload of grain while the others took the rest of the tithe to the monastery. Then, in the middle of the night, an old man (throughout the miracles, Remacle appears to people as an older, gray-haired man) approached him, and asked, “where he was from, or for what purpose he was camped out, and at whose pleasure it was that he was serving.” When Notherus demanded to know who this man was, the “*vir splendidus*” struck him on the head and ears with a staff, and left. The next morning, Notherus awoke to find that he had been healed of his injury. He then found a substitute cow to pull the cart, leaving the injured ox as a surety. He was able to finish delivering the tithe to the monastery, where he gave thanks for his healing. He then left the monastery, returned to the place where he had exchanged cows, and “found the cow, which he had left at the point of death, uninjured, and he returned with joy to his home.”⁷²

The compilers of the miracle collection follow this tale with one that they acknowledge is “another similar” story.⁷³ In this instance, a man named Theodradus, who was a member of the monastic *familia*, was “plowing some land that was suitable for sowing.” At one point he looked up from his work and saw an old man (*senex*) with gray hair who looked like a cleric (the readers of course understood that this was Remacle). The old man asked Theodradus if he knew how to get to Stavelot, and if he could lead him there, because he was in a hurry. The old man begged and cajoled him to stop his work, but Theodradus would not abandon the work that he owed to the monastery.

Finally, the sun set, and at twilight the old man again asked to be brought to the monastery. Even though he was done with his daily work, Theodradus still refused to take the man to the monastery, and so the man slapped him in the face, striking him with deafness. Remacle’s appearance as a living, animate person rather than as an invisible force reminds his dependents of the fact that they have real-world obligations (both financial and behavioral) to him. Theodradus is not only the servant of the monasteries, but also Remacle’s servant. When Theodradus ignores Remacle in order to finish his agricultural duties, the saint is content to wait for him to finish; it is only when Theodradus is finished with his labor and still refuses to take the old man to the monastery that he is punished. When Remacle cannot persuade Theodradus to visit the monastery with him, he finds a way to force the trip, turning it into a pilgrimage of healing.

When (after a few days) Theodradus traveled “most humbly” to the monastery to visit Remacle’s “holy tomb,” Remacle briefly withheld healing, punishing his tardiness. Theodradus had to sleep in the church, until the middle of the third night, when a man appeared near him holding a lantern, making the sign of the cross. Then “all of the man’s limbs were healed.” (This standard phrase of healing is odd in this context, since he had been struck not with paralysis, but with deafness.)

The compilers of the miracle collection took great care to display the importance of pilgrimage to Stavelot and to Remacle's tomb. Yet Malmedy was also included in one instance. The story recounts a drunken brawl in a nearby town. Lambert, a blacksmith from Malmedy, tried to intervene, and he was injured and left for dead. Eventually he healed enough to return to Malmedy, though he was still injured. On the return trip, as soon as he came to the point where he could see the monastery in the distance, he raised his eyes to heaven, fell to his knees, and prayed.⁷⁴ He was miraculously healed; the power of the monastery was so apparent that the man only needed to enter the surrounding religious zone to be healed.

The authors of the *Miracula* also carefully constructed stories that reinforced the fact that Remacle and his monasteries were far more important and powerful than other religious sites. Many of the miracles were in part about displaying Remacle's drawing power, and showing how far away his influence and reputation spread (thereby pushing the religious landscape far beyond Stavelot-Malmedy's immediate surroundings). Remacle's miracles inside the church of Stavelot became well known, and even (according to monastic legend) caught the attention of Louis the Pious. Louis was told a story by one of his nobles, who had visited Stavelot and been healed of blindness. Hearing this, Louis gave thanks to God, "kissing those eyes that had been restored by divine influence, and filled by an immense joy that God had deemed it fit to reveal signs of such miracles to his day and age."⁷⁵

Most of the people who heard and responded to Remacle's miracles were of more humble origins, like the woman healed at Remacle's fountain (1.3) who came all the way from Hesbaye (near Liège), pulled by the fame of the saint and the reputation of the monasteries and the fountain. In another of the stories (1.17), a man from the area around Metz who became sick made the pilgrimage to Stavelot not once, but twice. The second trip was necessary because after he was healed the first time, he promised to donate a vineyard to the monastery. When he returned home, he defaulted on the promise, and was stricken with sickness again. Once he returned to the monastery again, this time truly acknowledging the power of the saint and keeping his faith with the monastery, he was permanently healed.

Stavelot's dominance over other religious sites also appears in the miracles that explicitly claim that Remacle and his shrine are more powerful than other saints and their holy sites. Several miracles tell of people traveling to multiple shrines before being healed at Stavelot. The unnamed peasant who violated the Rogation Days (2.15) traveled to several saints' tombs before arriving at Stavelot, where only then was he cured by the monastic community's prayers. Another story (2.7) recounts the journey of a man who traveled through many different provinces trying to find a cure for his sick daughter. Finally, the girl was healed when her father brought her to Remacle's shrine at Stavelot, proving Remacle's superiority over other

regional saints and the importance of the monastery. Amulgerus, the man blinded by the wheat stalk (1.4) for working during a labor ban, also traveled to many sites before visiting Remacle's tomb. There, a bright light encircled him and then—recalling Remacle's physical attacks on Notherus and Theodradus—he was struck around the ears and the head by the force of the light, and his sight was restored.

Such stories situate the monasteries as a religious anchor within the wider landscape. Yet the monks (from their very origins interested in missionary outreach) did not only wait for people to come to them. Interested in extending their religious authority, they also took saints out into the broader region. At several points in their history, the monks either traveled with Remacle or introduced new saints to the monasteries, traveling with them throughout the region. Both of these types of events were occasions for the monks to make their saints more widely known and for them to extend the range and power of their religious landscape.

The opening chapters of the second book of the *Miracula* are an example of how the monks could assert their presence more widely. The book begins with a description of the Viking attack on Stavelot, and explains how the monks decided to flee with the body of the saint. The narrative follows Remacle's body as the monks carry it through various properties controlled by Stavelot-Malmedy. Miracles happen throughout the region in churches and basilicas, and a "local" saint (St. Semetrius) is involved in one of Remacle's miracles.⁷⁶ These miracles reinforce Remacle's authority, showing his lead position in the regional ecclesiastical hierarchy.

The *Miracula* explains that immediately after abandoning the monastery, Stavelot's monks went first to Bovigny, which had not been attacked. There, the monks were able to enjoy peace from the "Danes," but began to hear word that many of their properties had burned down.⁷⁷ One of the estates they heard about while they were in Bovigny was Calchus (the location of the fishing miracle discussed in [Chapter 2](#)). The monks found out that even though Calchus had not been destroyed by the Danes, it had been struck by a plague, and many people were either dead or dying. The miracle account reports that the disease was so bad that when people were being buried, sometimes two or three men were put in one grave.⁷⁸ This emphasis on the disruption of burial practices echoes many of the descriptions of the Justinianic plague but is also noteworthy in a miracle context in which the saint's own burial has been disrupted. The compiler notes the extent of the plague, even providing a description of the course of the disease, and then describes how it compelled many people to visit Remacle's relics. The presence of the saint caused many people to be healed and many others to avoid falling sick.

The compiler of this section then shifts his focus away from the ills facing the broader community to the sickness of a single young girl who had been afflicted by a paralytic disease and whose illness had caused her to

develop unusual eating habits. She never took any bread, ignored offers of organ meat, ate no legumes or vegetables, and would also drink sparingly, taking only water, a sweet liquor, and a little bit of milk. The author then connects this strange story directly to Remacle's miraculous history. The girl was healed because a man in a nearby village had a vision in which he was approached by a gray-haired man dressed as a cleric. The cleric told him to get up and go to Calchus, and tell the girl's mother that she would experience the deeds of St. Remacle at the church's altar. This is just the first of a series of miracles in the second book that connect the saint not to the churches at Stavelot and Malmedy, but instead with the physical infrastructure of other sites the houses controlled. These miracles bind together the monastic properties and connect them to the spiritual powers of the saint, extending Remacle's reputation (as did the miracles of pilgrimage in Book One) and the religious landscape directly controlled and influenced by the saint.

While the monks were forced to be away from the monastery because of the Viking attacks, Remacle's body performed miracles at the *castrum* of Longia, the *castellum* of Capraemontis, and the villa of Solimaniam. Another miracle took place in the fisc of Lierneux, which was unaffected by the Viking raids and where the monks were staying at the church of St. Semetrius. The movement of the monks and the saint following the Viking raids allowed the monks to shift their miraculous landscape. Not wishing to be dependent on pilgrimage and reputation alone to promote their saint, the monks actively extended his influence and presence. Though the initial procession may have been forced by Viking attack, the subsequent composition of the *Miracula Remaculi* was a way in later years to rewrite the history of that period, to link territorial control to pastoral protection, and to promote the entire territory that Stavelot controlled.

Most of the hagiographical sources from Stavelot-Malmedy focus on Remacle and his connections to the monastery of Stavelot. A notable exception to this pattern is the *Translatio Quirini* (written in the late eleventh century). It describes how Malmedy acquired its own saints, and how during the height of the conflict between the two houses the monks attempted to establish their own religious identity, independent of Stavelot. It describes the transfer of relics of Quirin and two other martyrs from the outskirts of Paris to Malmedy. The first book focuses on the historical context for the translation, and on connecting Malmedy to the imperial cause. Book two contains a lengthy discussion of the monks' journey through the region, describing many of the places they stopped and the miracles that occurred along the way, all of which show the power of the saints who would from that point forth be associated with Malmedy. Finally, once the martyrs were installed in Malmedy, further miracles mark Quirin as a new member of the local religious hierarchy. These miracles are interesting for their parallels to Remacle's legends and the degree to which communal

memory was important in the process of creating religious landmarks.

The anonymous author of the *Translatio Quirini* (who is probably also the author of the *Passio Agilolfi*) took care to link his monastery to both the royal and religious history of the region. The work opens with a lengthy passage on Charlemagne, praising his leadership and his protection of the church, paralleling the heroic role of Charles Martel in the *Passio*. The author then inserts what is allegedly a copy of a letter to Charlemagne from Hildebald, the archbishop of Cologne, although it is likely an invention by the author, since Donald Bullough points out that none of Hildebald's letters survive.⁷⁹ "There is in our parts," the letter reads, "a certain place that was named Malmedy, which was consecrated by its founder after Peter, the prince of the apostles, which was well-enough-built by your ancestors, and which was adorned by them with magnificent royal gifts."⁸⁰ This active appeal to imperial memory draws on the idea of imperial support of the monastery and also attempts to remove Malmedy from Stavelot's shadow, much as the same author tried to promote Malmedy over Cologne.

Book two opens with one of the stories from the monastic "road trip": the saint and his followers endure a sudden storm. While transferring the relics from Condate (Condè-sur-l'Esaut) the monks "were followed by people of both sexes [holding] wax candles. That day there were enormous winds, drenching rain, and the crash of thunder, from the morning to the sixth hour of the day." Yet, in a miraculous display of the holiness of the saints, "the lights, which the people were carrying in their hands were never able to be extinguished over the space of four miles ... [and] not a single drop of rain fell on the body of the saint."⁸¹

Since the monks of Malmedy were in active dialogue (and even possibly competition) with the *Miracula Remacli*, this miracle shares elements with a story told about Remacle in which candles were miraculously relit after they had been extinguished.⁸² That story takes place when the monks were traveling with Remacle's relics after the Viking attack. Wax candles that had been brought to the basilica in the villa of Solimaniam and placed there as alms had burned out. When the monks and the saint arrived, the candles were miraculously rekindled. Initially, the local residents did not believe this had taken place, and so the monks extinguished the candles and called on the saint. Then, "with divine consent the candles were restored to splendor" and "the place was lit so brightly that the entire area was visible, and no one present was able to doubt that these were divine lights twinkling around them." This confirmed Remacle's true presence in the basilica, and (as Quirin's candle miracle did) created another point in the miraculous landscape where the presence and power of the saint would remain part of local memory.

The author of the *Translatio Quirini* was not working just with the *Miracula Remacli*, but had also inherited a long tradition of mixed interpretations of nature, which he was able to draw from, mingle, and

interpret to present a complicated sense of the way monks, saints, peasants, and nature interacted. The storm and drenching rains of Quirin's miracle reflect a sense of the natural world as something harsh and dangerous that can be miraculously endured, and so it is all the more striking that the very next miracle draws on the images of pastoral nature: bountiful, verdant, and full of blessings.

This, too, took place after a long day of travel, as night drew near and the monks were resting in a field "after the labors and fatigues of the journey." They entered "a certain field, where there were laid out to be seen fertile plants and a spring flowing past a satisfying (*commodi*) place of great pleasantness (*multum amoenitatis*)."⁸³ As they rested, several sick people came up to the monks, including a boy who was miraculously healed. This fertile *locus amoenus* is not only a place of rest and quiet (similar, perhaps, to that shown by Remacle to St. Hadalinus) but also was explicitly not a part of the monastic desert. Instead it was a place where local people interacted with the saints, and where a pastoral view of the ability of saints to work miracles amidst green plants and clear springs would hopefully help link these new saints to the monasteries' control of the agricultural and economic landscapes.

The stories in the *Translatio* are told in a way that we can watch the progress of the saints across the medieval landscape. The author notes the location of many of the miracles, and (if the first and second places are reversed) their order reveals the path chosen by the monks. The monks traveled from Condè-sur-l'Eseaut near Paris, making stops in Rebais, Laon, Charleville, and Bastogne, St. Vith, and Amblève. The "walkability" of the route (as with some of the earlier boundary clauses) reinforces the idea that these stories were meant to inscribe saintly presence on the known landscape.

In this work and in the *Passio*, the author worked to demonstrate that Malmedy was not merely subordinate; it had a religious landscape all of its own, in which Quirin helped decide which sites were to be holy. In one instance, the author describes a miracle that prevents the monks from entering the city of Lyon, denying the bishop and the city access to Malmedy's saints. After another long day of travel, "when the setting sun was lowering its golden rays," the monks arrived in the suburbs of Lyon.⁸⁴ News of their arrival reached the bishop, who quickly invited the monks and the saint to enter the city walls. But the author then points out that "whether or not he wanted to do this out of a pious spirit is not known by us." The monks agreed to his hospitality, and the (overeager?) bishop then tried to personally move the coffin, but he could not budge it. The coffin stayed put and "it was not possible to move it at all, as if it were an immovable mountain."⁸⁵

Thus, the monks were diverted from the temptation to enter the city and they spent the night where they were. This mark of the saints' presence

outside of the city was further evidence of independence from the bishop and was perhaps the first step in claiming that the saints truly desired to leave cities behind and enter instead the mountains and forests of the Ardennes. The next morning, “when the dawn drove away the darkness of night,” the priest and clergy said mass for the people, and the author points out that “in that place, the saint was not absent.”⁸⁶ This is an echo of some of the strategies the same author used in the *Passio* to demonstrate that Agilolf had abandoned Cologne in favor of the Ardennes. (While the *Passio* does not mention Anno, the appearance in this piece of an “overeager bishop” attempting to take possession of “Malmedy’s saints” is telling.)

When, with great effort “they finally arrived in the *pagus* of the Ardennes,” the monks were rewarded with another miracle.⁸⁷ They arrived at Bastogne, which the author points out was an “ancient villa built by the local residents.” They were approached by a boy who had been born blind. The monks prayed on his behalf, and added their tears to their prayers, so “that the faith of the supplicant could wrest forth that which nature had denied him.” The saints then cured the boy: the fountain of his tears became a healing medicine “and with the shadows removed, he filled his empty eyes with the unknown sun.”⁸⁸

The *Translatio Quirini* appears to have been intended, at least in part, to compete directly with the miracles and cult locations associated with Stavelot and Remacle. The clearest expression of this is the story of Quirin’s fountain, a direct challenger to the *fons Remaculi*. One day, he reports, the monks arrived at a fountain where they decided to rest. While the relics were there, a crippled woman was healed, and the site was thereafter called the “*fons sancti Quirini*.” The author remarked that the name endured, “and not without merit; it is not only sweet for drinking, but indeed it brings health to faithful who seek it.”⁸⁹ The author seems to have deliberately reflected the older stories of Remacle’s fountain, also characterized by its simultaneous usefulness and sanctity.

Just as Remacle’s body reportedly emitted the “odor of paradise,” marking Stavelot’s church as a holy site, a similar miracle established the sanctity of Malmedy. When the casket holding the new saints finally crossed the threshold of the monastery at Malmedy, “it emitted a wondrous fragrance, which lasted for a month showing the sanctity of the martyrs.” And then at Malmedy “their names began to grow in fame,” and common people came from all around to be healed by them.⁹⁰

Another miracle relates the sacralization of a local landmark. Following the reception of the new relics in the church at Malmedy, the large crowd of locals who had assembled to watch the event slowly began to disperse and return to their houses. “There is a mountain next to the monastery,” the author wrote, “which is called the seat of Bertulus, because a certain man, erecting the first tabernacle there, bestowed his name on the place.” Some of the homeward-bound people, “crossing over the ridgeline of the mountain,

saw from a distance three candles [at the place] where that day the exhausted monks had set down the casket, as if in revelation of the three saints.”⁹¹ The miraculous lights were visible for three nights. This revelation of the newly sanctified mountain was recognized by the monks, who then inscribed their presence more permanently. “There,” the author continues, “in honor of the saints and for future memory, a high cross was erected.” Though the cross, likely made of wood, “through the passing of time fell apart due to age,” it was always, at least until the time when the story was set down, “restored by the faithful as a testament to these things.”⁹²

Saints themselves were believed to be able to leave their mark on the landscape. While they were traveling to Malmedy with Quirin and the other saints, the monks came to a river where it was customary for the women to come from all over “to put their flax in the running waters, so that, taking the power from [the stream], it would be malleable.” One woman, inspired by the presence of the martyr, confessed in front of a crowd of onlookers gathered to see the saint that she was in the habit of secretly taking the flax left by different people, “so that I might look after my own poverty from the abundance of others.” In recognition of her confession, and perhaps of her desire for abundance, on that spot “the grass kept its greenness eternally; it was neither burned by summer’s heat nor taken away by winter’s freeze.”⁹³

The abundance of this site not only reflects the monastic goal of marking out a Christian landscape, but is also similar to other images of the verdant and pastoral Ardennes as divinely protected and revealed. This can be compared to the peaceful and “eternally quiet” site revealed by Remacle and to a miracle found in the *Passio*.⁹⁴ The eternally verdant grass where Quirin’s body rested near the river was now part of a Christian landscape. But before it became a religious site it had been a part of the local economy, and by reporting the “customary” uses of the river and the woman’s guilty confession, this story reflects the monastic role in regulating local land-use customs. Such stories were rooted in and validated the monasteries’ actions as landlords and social authorities.

The *Translatio Quirini* demonstrates how new saints could be introduced to the local religious community, and how the process of bringing the relics to the monastery could become part of an attempt to ground the saints and their miracles in the local religious landscape. The contemporary *Triumphus Remaculi* shows how this could work in the opposite direction. In this case, by traveling *away* from their monasteries and bringing the saints with them, the monks could extend their prominence and inscribe their saint’s presence on even more locations.

The *Triumphus* describes Stavelot’s successful recovery of Malmedy from Anno in 1071. The monks of Stavelot saw Anno’s usurpation of Malmedy as both a predatory seizure of their property and an act of religious interference, and so to reverse it, they brought the reliquary shrine of Remacle to the royal court. The *Triumphus* sets the terms of the historical

discussion and records Remacle's victorious march through the religious landscape, using the body of the saint as a strategic weapon. Miracles associated with Remacle's body justify the monks' trip, show their dominant position within the religious community, and, ultimately, reclaim control of Malmedy. A later archbishop of Cologne, Frederick, claimed that the emperor was convinced to rule in Stavelot's favor "by the blessed Remacle, immeasurably radiating with miracles at the royal court."⁹⁵

The *Triumphus* opens with a lengthy discussion of the conflict between Stavelot and Malmedy. The anonymous author then describes Anno's involvement in the dispute, telling how Anno proceeded "to invade and to sell Malmedy," described as "the property of St. Remacle."⁹⁶ The author then exclaims that "when the rumor of that reached our ears, oh our joy turned into such great pain and such great sadness!" Theoderic, the abbot of Stavelot, reacted immediately, consulting with his advocate Duke Frederick, who sent messengers to the archbishop and told him of his intention to reclaim the property. He gathered an "armed band" at Malmedy, occupied a nearby mountain, and constructed a defensive wall and ditch.⁹⁷ Meanwhile the Duke and the abbot continued to pursue their claims in other ways, including appealing to the king.

However, it was not until Remacle became an active agent in the protection of his property that Stavelot's claims were successful. The second book of the *Triumphus* opens with Theoderic's decision to attend the royal Easter court at Liège (in May 1071), "and to carry to that same court the body of St. Remacle, our protector."⁹⁸ Theoderic's strategy fit with general eleventh-century attitudes toward relics and the role of saints. Formal religious processions with relics had become widespread, in part as a natural evolution from the necessary removal of relics due to Viking raids (as the monks of Stavelot had done and recorded in the *Miracula*). These processions, originally isolated events, became regular festivals intended to reconnect the church and the laity. This use of touring relics to garner popular support intersected with the practice of invoking the saints and their relics in monastic conflict and the Peace of God movement directed against predatory lordship.⁹⁹ According to the *Triumphus*, Remacle himself set the terms of this trip, rushing his litter-bearers and impelling them to travel faster. The author then asserts that "therefore it should not be doubted that St. Remacle desired to visit St. Lambert," who had himself sought refuge with Remacle "long ago, in the flesh." Thus began Remacle's trip, in which he would visit and draw upon the power of other saints, work miracles in Liège and its surroundings, and sway the mind of an emperor.¹⁰⁰

The importance of travel and the saint's "visitations" is underscored in the next story; the monks and Remacle arrive at the villa of Louvegne, which was one of their dependent properties.¹⁰¹ There they were met by monks of St. Semetrius at Liernaux, who had brought their own relics to support Stavelot's cause. (Here it is important to remember that Remacle had worked

a miracle in the church of St. Semetrios during the procession recorded in the *Miracula*.) They stayed one night, and the next morning Remacle gave them a further sign. Louvegne was located approximately halfway between Stavelot and Liège, and in the morning they woke to see “a splendidly glowing path of light, suspended in the air and stretching from the oratory of Stavelot up to the house of St. Lambert [at Liège].” This miraculous sign gave the monks great hope for a smooth journey, and they were happy, “rising before the first cock-crow from the place we were resting, rejoicing in the knowledge that we would travel on our difficult path easily, without labor and impediments.”¹⁰² The natural world provided the sign that the difficult terrain would not be an obstacle to the saint’s journey, and literally mapped out their route.

After arriving at Liège, the monks processed (on Easter morning) into the cathedral and set Remacle in front of the altar. The monks then began singing psalms and hymns and, still singing, processed to St. Lambert’s crypt. By the time they had finished, a large crowd had gathered (as, no doubt, they intended!). The monks then prayed for the restoration of their property, and after they had finished their prayers, the king arrived. And “with a sudden noise,” Remacle’s coffin “was seen to lift up into the air.”¹⁰³ Remacle’s floating coffin defied nature and demonstrated his desire for the king to help the monks of Stavelot.

At another point in the proceedings, the monks brought Remacle from the church into the episcopal palace, and set the casket on the king’s table during a banquet. When the king first refused to hear the monks, and ordered them to return the saint to the church, the otherwise sturdy table collapsed, and a bystander was trapped under the fallen casket, his leg shattered. He pointed out to the saint that he was innocent of wrong-doing, and “as soon as he had finished speaking, as suddenly as his bone had been struck, by means of the working of divine virtue, his broken tibia became whole again,” though a scar remained as visible proof of the miracle.¹⁰⁴ Another miracle also took place in the hall, visible to “all of the people who had come to the place in which the venerable body was resting.”¹⁰⁵ In a third instance, a blind woman “from the area around Liège” was also healed, drawing yet more crowds. Finally, the frustrated king ordered the saint be removed and placed back in the church. However, whereas earlier the casket had floated on its own, now it proved to be too heavy to lift, and “it was not possible to raise it from that place—just like an immobile, heavy stone.” Further miracles occurred at the casket, including the healing of two blind men and the appearance from within the coffin of a beautiful white dove (“like the one that came from Noah’s Ark”).¹⁰⁶ Recognizing this miracle as an olive branch the monks (and Remacle?) conceded and returned the saint to the church, where his ability to work in tandem with other saints was again demonstrated.

Around noon on 9 May, Remacle once again let his displeasure be felt. A

loud noise filled the church and drew people there to see what was happening. Then, “the casket was clearly seen to be moved, and to be lifted up in the air almost a cubit high.” A second booming noise filled the church, emanating from down in the crypt “where the most holy body of the precious martyr Lambert was resting.” A priest who was in the crypt reported that a dense cloud filled the space, obscuring it from view. Then the cloud immediately disappeared and the crypt “glowed with the clear light of the sun.” The priest reported that “in the middle of this splendor” two glowing figures could be seen, “namely Remacle and Lambert,” and they appeared to be talking to each other.¹⁰⁷

Remacle colluded with Lambert; this is the most visible sign of a theme found throughout the *Triumphus*. Remacle and the monks of Stavelot both superseded and co-opted other saints. They enlisted the aid and relics of St. Semetrius, they set off “to visit Lambert,” and they relied on their ecclesiastical network for material and political support in their pursuit of Anno and Malmedy. Miracles en route showed Remacle’s “drawing power” and his prominence in relation to other saints. When he healed the blind woman from Liège, Remacle was, in effect, taking over St. Lambert’s role—healing pilgrims from Lambert’s territories in his own church. As word spread of Remacle’s miraculous presence in Liège, “soon a large crowd of miserales, of blind, lame, and parched, gathered together.”¹⁰⁸ One woman even came from Paris and was healed of her “monstrous” paralysis.¹⁰⁹ Many of these people were healed both publicly and, importantly, in the presence of the king. The monks claimed that it was because of these miracles that Henry restored Malmedy to Stavelot, returning Remacle’s property.

The very next day, the monks began the trip to return Remacle to Stavelot. After they had crossed the Meuse, they stopped to say Mass. One of the hymns that they sang during this stop was the “*Salva festa dies*,” an Easter hymn that Vogtherr points out is attributed to Venantius Fortunatus, whose words and images seem to permeate the medieval Ardennes—a clear legacy of Late Antiquity.¹¹⁰ The monks then continued their journey, arriving at Malmedy and carrying Remacle in triumph, as it was through his actions that Malmedy had been restored. The author concludes by reminding the audience of the importance of Malmedy to Remacle’s history and to Stavelot’s religious identity. He wrote that Malmedy, now eternally restored to Stavelot, was the place where “in the beginning [Remacle] had first lived, having eliminated the thorns and all of the filth [of paganism],”¹¹¹ and where he had ordered the monastery to be built. He also reminded his audience that Sigibert had approved of these actions and given Remacle the property. Thus, Henry’s decision not only reunited the two monasteries but also restored (and mirrored) the original royal donation, giving the saint back his first foundation and one of the two center points of his religious landscape.

Saint-Hubert's Religious Landscape

Stavelot and Malmedy were not the only competitors for control over the Ardennes. As exemplified in the struggle over Malmedy, the archbishops of Liège and Cologne had stakes in running the region's ecclesiastical administration (and thereby a significant economic and tax base), as did secular powers who additionally desired the credentials that came with active support of religious communities. There were also other monastic communities that associated their saints with control of the Ardennes. A closer look at the monastery of Andages/Saint-Hubert shows how that community also took great care to link their saints to their immediate surroundings.

Set in the same historical and religious context as the other evangelizing monasteries of the Ardennes, Andages told similar origin stories involving the conversion of people and landscapes by both individual holy men and the monastic collective. The *Vita Huberti prima*, written by an unknown monk between 706 and 727 (before St. Hubert's body was moved to Andages), includes a discussion of Hubert's efforts to convert pagans. Like Remacle, Hubert Christianized the landscape. He "rooted out" the error of paganism, which was "washed away by the waters of baptism." He "destroyed through a consuming fire the many idols and sculptures that were gathered together in the Ardennes." When the "fanatical" locals persisted in venerating the ashes of their idols, Hubert ordered them to observe harsh penance, incorporating them into the Christian program. He also destroyed "many likenesses and statues" throughout the area, replacing them with Christian religious landmarks. He built churches dedicated to the holy martyrs "in many different places." The author of the biography signals this creation of a religious landscape with nature metaphors, noting that once Hubert had done this, the kingdom of the Franks was lit up "by a most splendid illumination, as if by the rays of the sun."¹¹²

In 825, Hubert's relics were transferred from Liège to Andages, and a new phase of religious and economic development began for the monastery. The monks renamed the house Saint-Hubert, and then had the task of connecting their new saint to the religious culture that they had already been working for generations to establish. Shortly after the translation, Jonas of Orleans wrote a second biography that follows the same basic structure of the first biography, adding the story of the relocation of the saint. The first collection of Hubert's miracles was assembled between 840 and 845, and a second was produced in the end of the eleventh century. As with the biographies, the later collection of miracles parallels and reiterates (but does not exactly duplicate) the earlier version; it also contains many miracles that occurred after 845.

All the miracles recorded in the first collection take place at the monastery. These miracles were originally compiled within a generation of

the installation of the new saint, and worked to connect him to the monastery and attract pilgrims, meeting the need for a new audience for the once-struggling monastery. The opening miracle in the first collection tells how in the very same year that St. Hubert's relics were brought to the monastery, a blind pilgrim arrived. After praying at the tomb of the newly installed saint, his sight was restored. This miracle is retold in the second collection as well, and both versions note that the pilgrim came from "somewhere far away." The author of the second version also suggests that the man was healed as a reward for enduring the hardships of such long travels.¹¹³

People continued to come from near and far to interact with St. Hubert. Several of the places the pilgrims came from were directly controlled by Saint-Hubert (such as the villa of Marlido) whereas other local sites (such as Braz) were controlled by multiple parties. A crippled noble woman from the villa of Trodina was healed as soon as she was brought to the saint's tomb.¹¹⁴ One pilgrim even came from the fisc of Chauvigny after having been told by the local priest that he should take his gravely ill daughter to Saint-Hubert, where she was healed during Mass.¹¹⁵ This miracle reinforces the importance of the holy space at Saint-Hubert and also suggests how ecclesiastical networks and connections across the religious landscape could support the growing cult. (This is even more interesting since Chauvigny is nearer to Malmedy; this may be an instance of local politics and allegiances as the priest "steers" the man away from one holy site and to another.) Parallels with Remacle's miracles further suggest some competition over the pilgrim traffic, religious identification, and financial support of the residents of the Ardennes.

Local priests could steer individual pilgrims to the monastery, but to achieve a wider audience and a greater prominence in the crowded religious landscape, the monks of Saint-Hubert also promoted their larger religious celebrations.¹¹⁶ Several of the recorded miracles occur during the celebrations for St. Hubert's feast days, and in the case of the furious storm raging through the countryside the monks used the miracle story to create and reinforce a new feast day. When quelling the storm, they engaged in a ritualized procession, "gathering together with the relics and crosses." They established a new annual holiday, marked by a procession to the church and offerings at the saint's tomb.¹¹⁷

These early miracles place heavy emphasis on the church (especially the altar and the saint's tomb) and the monastery. In one early miracle, a carpenter comes as a pilgrim and is healed in the monastery. Then, the connection between the physical monastery and miracle is underscored by his decision to remain at the monastery for the rest of his life, helping to build and repair the church.¹¹⁸ Several miracles added in the second collection continue this emphasis on the monastery itself as a site of healing. Three further cripples were healed inside the church—two in front of the

saint's tomb and one in front of the main altar (2.12 and 2.13). A noble who had stolen wine from the monastery "hastened to the monastery barefoot in the harshness of winter" to seek forgiveness.¹¹⁹

Yet as did the monks of Stavelot, over time the monks of Saint-Hubert became interested in extending their religious influence past the walls of the cloister and out into the broader world. Whereas all of the early miracles are closely associated with the monastery itself, the majority of the miracles added in the second collection occur away from the monastery. Triggered by far-flung events, happening as a result of promises made to the saint *in absentia*, or (as with Remacle) occurring while the monks and the saint were seeking refuge from Viking attacks, these stories show the reach of the monastery and the saint.

The miracles also connect the saint to control over the natural world, regulation of agricultural labor, and the protection of resources belonging to the monastery. Several of St. Hubert's miracles involve aspects of wild and dangerous nature; he both calms and causes storms (miracle 2.16, and the *vita Huberti prima* 4), involves himself in a boar hunt, and heals people who had been bitten by a rabid wolf (2.14) and a rabid dog (2.21). Many of these nature miracles are about wild nature, but they also suggest an interest in the control of resources and the domestication of nature.

The monks of Saint-Hubert, like the monks of Stavelot, present their saint as a regulator of both the actions of nature and the actions of people. This can be seen in a story in which Hubert intervened when a local man tried to illicitly annex monastic property. When the man ignored a challenge to his rights to harvest the field and climbed back on his horse, the horse took off, and ran "insanely" around the properties until it collapsed and died. The man, injured and frightened, gave the land to the monastery (even going in person to make the donation) but went back on his word once he was healed, at which point he was stricken blind (2.10).

The miracle collections may also have enabled the monks of Saint-Hubert to carve out their own religious space in the face of the stronger and better-known presences of St. Remacle and Stavelot-Malmedy. The competition for pilgrims is paralleled by clear competition for landed resources; many of the sites explicitly named in Hubert's miracles were partially controlled by Stavelot-Malmedy. One miracle even discusses a conflict that began between Saint-Hubert and a local count "of great fierceness and pride" and expanded to involve some of "St. Remacle's" property, specifically a pasture in the property of Burias.¹²⁰

Another of Hubert's miracles takes place in the villa of Braz, an estate that was very close to the monastery of Saint-Hubert. But Stavelot claimed partial control of the property, and when a dispute arose over control of its church, the monks of Stavelot presented a history of the property that made far-reaching claims. Stavelot's monks asserted that they had held the church of Braz before the early ninth century, but that it had then been stolen from

them. Then (invoking their favorite patrons) they claimed Charlemagne had restored it to them, and that they had then controlled it until the late tenth century, when it was given to the manager of Longia. The property was then restored to them through donation in 1103.¹²¹ Then in 1107 the monks of Stavelot received tenants, properties, and woodlands in Braz from another patron.¹²² By 1130, Wibald included Braz as one of the churches that owed its tithes to Stavelot, and people from Braz even appear as witnesses in several of Stavelot's tenth-century charters. Stavelot's documentary claim appears to have been strong.

So around the same time, the monks of Saint-Hubert made a different kind of claim on the loyalties and monies of the residents of Braz. They claimed that on St. Hubert's feast day, a peasant named Weremund arrived at the monastery, but such a large crowd had gathered for the festival that he was forced to leave his horse in a nearby pasture and go to the monastery on foot. In the evening, when he returned, "with quick steps to the place where he had left his horse" he could not find it, and so returned to the saint's tomb. Like the peasant who threatened to withhold tribute from Remacle, Weremund bargained directly with the saint. However, his was a more positive plea, as he promised St. Hubert that he would buy a candle for him if he returned the horse. He then left the church and returned home.

St. Hubert recognized the devotion of his tenant, and acted to ensure that he would find his stolen horse. The thief had tried to escape through the woods that "were next to the monastery." However, he was unable to find a way out of the forest, no matter how long he tried. (Here we see again the idea of a dense, encircling wood that can be threatening, in this case to the enemies of the saints.) According to the first telling of the story, the thief's senses were dulled by the saint, and he eventually returned to the middle of the crowds and confessed, whereupon Weremund recognized and joyfully reclaimed his horse, saying, "That is mine! That horse is mine!"¹²³

This is not the only connection between Remacle's miracles and those of Hubert. The monks also (just like the monk from Malmedy) told stories about a fountain that competed with the *fons Remacli*.¹²⁴ The story of a blind woman's healing is recorded in both early miracle collections, but the first book describes it in greater detail. An unnamed woman who had been blind from birth went with her parents to give alms at the monastery. When they entered the monastery, there was a teeming crowd of people. The mass of unseen people overwhelmed her, and she asked her parents to take her outside. Once outdoors, she asked them to take her to the place "where the irrigation stream that had been diverted ... from the spring called 'Andaina fontana' flows through canals for various monastic purposes."¹²⁵

The miracle is filled with watery language, drawing attention to the monastically controlled waters. When the woman enters the church, the people are described as a mingled mass and a flowing wave, whose chaotic motion she tries to flee. When she asks to be brought away, the author uses

a Latin word that could also be used to describe water diversion (“*citatim me deviate*”). Her movement from chaos to monastically imposed order is further highlighted by the description of the water. It is specifically described as a diverted stream (*limpha ... derivatur*), flowing through canals into the monastery, where it was redirected to suit monastic needs.

The story showcased the monks’ technological achievement—the complex water system that they had constructed to channel and redirect the natural spring. This redirection of the spring reinforced their control of nature and reminded those who saw or read about these canals of the monastery’s economic power and social status. When the woman’s companions brought her to the water, they highlighted the monastic structure. “Look,” they said, “water is flowing through the canals.”¹²⁶ The woman then washed her face three times in the water, and “light filled her eyes.” Although derived from a natural spring, the water that cured the woman was monastically engineered. She actively sought out the diverted, managed waters. By emphasizing that these healing waters were the result of the manipulation and domestication of nature, the author of this story asserted monastic dominance over not only the water, but also the miraculous landscape.

By using religious miracle, the monks linked their own manipulation of nature with that of their saint. The saint (and God) transcended nature by restoring the woman’s sight. The vehicle through which he did so was not the natural spring, but instead the water the monks had engineered for their own purposes. The monks of Saint-Hubert thus balanced their secular and religious powers, ultimately reinforcing both.

Almost two centuries later, when an anonymous monk penned the second book of St. Hubert’s miracles, he chose to repeat and reinforce the importance of these images of control over water even as he drastically abridged other key elements of the original story. For example, he removes all reported speech, even a direct invocation of the saint and a statement of the woman’s desire to make a pilgrimage to the monastery. Yet in spite of the abridgement, the author chose to retain the watery images of the flood of people in the church (*eam confluentibus turbis*). Most importantly, the author retained the woman’s request to be led “to the waters that flow through the canals for the use of the monastery (*in usus monasterii*).” Once there, she washed her face three times, “and in between washings” prayed to the saint. Her sight was restored, and again the reader is shown the power of the monastically controlled waters.¹²⁷ Repetition enhanced the value of the story, just as Stavelot-Malmedy’s retelling and rewriting enhanced the value of the story of Remacle’s fountain.

Remacle’s fountain and Saint-Hubert’s canals are also linked by a sense that both were powerful signs of how nature and human intervention in nature could serve direct monastic needs. Saint-Hubert’s canals were intended to serve monastic purposes (“*ad diversos monasterii usus influit*”

and “*in usus monasterii*”) and Stavelot-Malmedy’s fountains were “fit for human purposes” (“*hominum quidem usibus apti*”; “*humanis usibus opportune*”). Yet rather than simply being a broad theological claim to dominion, all of these stories are linked specifically to the way that *monks* could use nature and resources to enhance their religious goals.

As this book has shown, monastic purposes of course included sustainable economic use, and agricultural development and the harvesting of resources helped the monasteries gain worldly power. The monks of the Ardennes used their religious identity and their control of stories to justify this use of nature to enhance their social and economic power. But monastic purposes also included understanding the abstract and religious value of both tamed and wild nature, and figuring out from both experience and imagination how people could learn about God from the natural world.

The experiences and ideas of Stavelot-Malmedy resonated with those of Saint-Hubert, Prüm, and other monastic communities because despite local differences, they were also part of a shared cultural and religious sphere. They also faced the same broad historical and cultural forces that shaped medieval culture. A wave of Benedictine reforms, international literary and intellectual movements, and empire-wide conflicts such as the Investiture Controversy all shaped the worldview of Stavelot-Malmedy’s monks, and shifted their options, status, and political standing. The fortunes of royal abbeys ebbed and flowed as the German emperors gained and lost power, and as individual bishops tried to assert increasing control of an administrative church. Tied as they were to the patronage of kings, several of Stavelot’s abbots were forced to choose between bishops and monarchs; though sometimes the correct decision in the political moment, in the long run as German royal power diminished in the Ardennes, so too did that of Stavelot and Malmedy.

Some ideas about nature and monastic identity remained constant through these developments, but others changed as new saints, new monks, and new ideals spread through Europe. The reforms associated with Cluny and Gorze from 900 through about 1050 had touched Stavelot—several abbots were in fact deeply enmeshed in the economic, spiritual, and political reform movements. Stavelot-Malmedy gained spiritually and economically from these movements, and emerged from them with increased regional prominence. Yet the new waves of monastic reform of the 1100s, connected to the rise of rise of papal authority, the crusades, and the Urban or Commercial Revolution were not as kind to Stavelot-Malmedy. The Cistercians and Franciscans developed their own relationships to nature, money, and power, giving the Benedictine houses more competition for control of the religious landscape. The nearby urban centers in the Low Countries produced such groups as the beguines, and Wibald himself had an openly antagonistic relationship with a house of independent canonesses. From the perspective of these veteran Benedictines, all of these were

problematic and destabilizing forces.

Finally, by the twelfth century, patterns of environmental development were also changing. Denser settlement altered the character of forests and the balance between woods and arable land as the great clearances gave more prominence to cereal agriculture. The urban and technological revolutions of the Central Middle Ages changed resource exploitation practices, increased commercially oriented agriculture, and shifted the flow of goods and the goals of political and economic leaders. Development of peat lands in the Low Countries and even in the Hohe Venn near Stavelot, increasingly cash-driven woodland exploitation in the nearby Champagne region, and the transformation of agriculture all over Northern Europe in response to both new knowledge from the crusades and the increased demands of city-dwellers would have created palpable changes for the Ardennes.¹²⁸ Labor practices and bonds were also changing, and abbots of Stavelot-Malmedy and other monasteries would have been facing tough administrative decisions.

For Stavelot and Malmedy also competed for resources and power with secular powers and with other monasteries. As much of the best recent work on monastic communities shows, although there was a pool of common values, each monastic community had individual histories, social networks, and challenges. Not all monks shared the same ideas about nature. If the monks of Saint-Hubert and those of Stavelot could tell such strikingly different stories about forests, wild animals, and agriculture, what kinds of stories might monks in the cities tell? There was no single “monastic” attitude toward nature in the Middle Ages, and there was definitely not a universal Christian one. Previous broad generalizations about medieval religious ideas about nature need to be questioned, but they cannot be reevaluated fully until more detailed case studies of this type are attempted. This study suggests that each monastic house, when explored more deeply, would have its own story to tell of its relationship to nature. By treating each community as a group constructing its own history and telling its own stories, and located in a distinct place, we can tease out the processes through which individual communities developed their own, distinct environmental imaginations.

The climate and physical environment of the medieval Ardennes shaped survival strategies, provided resources, and put limits on human actions. But the medieval landscape was about more than this—it also provided ways that identities could be forged and tested, a place for imagining an ideal monastic world, and the means to negotiate complicated relationships. The Ardennes helped the monks of Stavelot-Malmedy to explore and explain such things as the human control (or lack thereof) of nature, the morality of resource use, the relationship between humans and other species, and the ways in which religious salvation was tied to nature. The Ardennes, both as spiritual battleground and the pasture of eternal life, fulfilled for the monks what Schama

has called “one of our most powerful yearnings: the craving to find in nature a consolation for our mortality.”¹²⁹

This book spans a long time period, but does not, in the end, tell a clear story of environmental change over time. Instead, it follows the slow accretion of stories and interpretations, and is even occasionally the story of how the monks ignored actual changing circumstances. The monks used natural resources to build the strength of their community, and they used stories about nature to build a past, then to blur it and rewrite it again. And so, rather than end with simply a discussion of the many ways in which the world around the monks was changing by the twelfth century, I will now (as so many monastic works do) circle back in the narrative, and conclude where I began—with the death of a saint that tied a local landscape directly to immortality and the divine.

Epilogue

The *Passio Agilolfi* Revisited

The *Passio Agilolfi*, which appears throughout this book, provides a fitting conclusion. As an eleventh-century hagiographical work describing the obscure Carolingian history of the monasteries, it bridges much of the period covered by this study. As an interpretive and highly extrapolated account of the monasteries' early history, the *Passio* is a complex source that includes discussions of the religious and secular history of the monasteries and ties Malmedy into the history of the larger region. It also has information about some of Malmedy's properties, and contains detailed descriptions of the surrounding woodland environment. Like most of Stavelot-Malmedy's narrative documents, the *Passio* tells us more about the concerns and conflicts of the period it was composed in than the period it describes. As discussed in [Chapter 4](#), it was, like the *Triumphus Remacii*, written to influence contemporary conflicts. Finally, because of its transformation of historical memory, its clear emphasis on Malmedy instead of Stavelot, and its vivid and complex descriptions of the Ardennes, the *Passio* is an excellent example of how the monks constructed their identity through their narrative sources and their depictions of the natural world.

The *Passio* also reveals how medieval authors deliberately constructed contradictory images of forests and woodlands, and used those to draw bigger conclusions about moral human behavior. For example, when narrating the death of the saint, the author of the *Passio* used the contrast between the wilderness and the pastoral to show the contrast between the enemy troops and the monks. The enemies, like the Viking invaders of centuries past, are described as savage wild animals, in direct contrast to the pastoral and flowering spirits of the monks. The author maintained both the wilderness and the pastoral views of the local landscape throughout his story. He creatively juxtaposed these views of the environment to highlight the two pivotal narrative moments in the *Passio*: the death of the saint and Charles Martel's victory.

Wilderness Versus Pastoral: The Death of the Saint

The author's representation of the forest as part of a dangerous wilderness can be seen in a passage that describes the rebel army's attack on Cologne. Using the violence of storms and the viciousness of wild animals as

metaphors for this attack, the monk of Malmedy wrote: “Then, in the same way that varied winds stir up the air, the wolves burst in upon the holy flock, and many fell to the sword’s edge, just as the tumult of wolves scatters a flock of sheep, and as the predator seizes prey in its bloody mouth.”¹ After the attack on the city was over, these men/wild animals returned to “the harsh mountains of the Ardennes.” After fleeing into the forest, “they came to a place called Amblève that was surrounded by a dense woods (*nemora*) at a high elevation, and defended by hills.”² In a sense, like the wild animals that came out of the woods to attack the city of Vienne and spark the Rogation Days, these ferocious men, tied to the wilderness, violated the civilized borders.

The woods near the Amblève are first described in ways that remind readers of the dangers of the wilderness that the monks faced. At the same time, pastoral elements also appeared since, in spite of their evil intent, the troops were able to find shelter. The monk of Malmedy recounted that “the place was named after the river, which provided many accommodations and amenities, especially an abundance of grass.”³ This initial description sets the tone for the remainder of the descriptions of nature in the *Passio*. The monk of Malmedy alternately presented the Ardennes, and specifically the forested area near Malmedy, as a dangerous environment and as a classical *locus amoenus*.

The author of the *Passio* deliberately swerved back and forth between different descriptions of the natural world, in part to keep the tension mounting throughout the story, and in part to show the triumphant transformations that faith and God can bring to the world. This is most clearly seen in the passages describing the death of the saint. Agilolf’s martyrdom, on Easter Sunday, is the major narrative event in the first book of the *Passio*, and clearly shows the juxtaposition of the forest as a peaceful and beautiful place with the forest as a dangerous, violent space. The author of the *Passio* creates a close tie between the death of the martyr, the rebirth of spring, and the forest as a *locus amoenus*. Agilolf was martyred during an otherwise peaceful interlude; the woods had become a permanent shelter for the troops, in which they are at leisure to hunt, train, and relax.⁴ On the day of Agilolf’s death, “it was the time when the hoary ice melts off of the mountains and the west wind loosens up the fetid earth. The woods (*silvae*) were in leaf, the plants were bright with flowers.”⁵

This passage is the clearest suggestion that the author deliberately invoked the classical, pastoral idea of the *locus amoenus*: the first half of the passage, describing the west wind, is a quotation from Vergil’s *Georgics*. But the author has adapted the pastoral scene, and deliberately draws attention to the forest as beautiful through the sentence he adds. The deliberate use of the classical trope is found in the author’s other writing, where a woman describes heaven as a “locus amoenitatis.”⁶ The forest, which was first presented to readers as dark and imposing, and sheltering dangerous

invaders, is here presented as a spiritual haven that, like wilderness isolation, has a potentially protective role for the saint.

However, the saint had to leave the shelter of the protective woods; “The holy man passed through the woods, and when he was approaching the enemy troops, he walked through a green field.”⁷ As he entered the field, he is approached by the enemy guards, depicted as ferocious wild animals, the constant metaphorical threat to the monks of the Ardennes. “They had selected guards and watchmen,” the *Passio* reports, “who were known to be the stronger, crueller, and more cunning of them. When they saw Christ’s priest approaching, they gnashed their teeth cruelly, like a lion, and took delight, like a wolf at approaching prey.”⁸ These guards were fully transformed by bloodlust into animals: “Their bridled spirits were filled up completely with rage, and the flames of envy were burning their hearts. They thirst to spill out his blood, and to destroy him through slaughter.” The base nature of the guard’s motives is again reinforced by the author’s reaction. He interjects, “O most cruel rage, O new fury and madness!”⁹

But, just as Remacle was able to triumph over the devil, represented by wild animals in the landscape, Agilolf ultimately, through his sanctity, endured, and this was marked in the landscape. Just as swiftly as he startled the reader out of the peaceful spring day, the author again returned to it, noting that as soon as the “fierce guards” saw Agilolf die, they left, and the saint was alone in the glade, allowing the space to be redefined again as a peaceful and holy site. When Agilolf died, “A white dove, white as snow, came out of his mouth and flew to the stars.”¹⁰ As Levison points out, this is a passage that the author borrowed from a popular hagiographical source of the era, the *Vita Sollemnis*. However, the fact that this image was not original to the *Passio* does not detract from the skill at which the monk of Malmedy manipulated and crafted his vacillating images. As I argued in [Chapter 4](#), it is his skilled borrowing, rewriting and recontextualizing of sources that makes this piece so fascinating. After the dove flew away, Agilolf’s “lifeless body fell down to the ground, and herbs sprouted forth from his rose-colored blood.”¹¹ The story of the discovery of the body reinforced the message of a sanctified landscape; the congregation went to the Amblève and saw the saint lying dead on the ground, and noted that his “blood dyes the soil of the Ardennes.”¹²

The author then confirmed the holiness of the pastoral landscape of the saint’s death. At the spot where God’s athlete had won his trophy, “the seed of the place was preserved in perpetual greenness.” In a passage that is similar to a description from his other work, the *Translatio Quirini*, he reported that the greenness of the spot “was neither burned by summer’s heat nor taken away by winter’s freeze.” This place was set apart from the rest of the agricultural world because of its sanctity; despite the fact that it was ever verdant, “it remains to this day uncultivable and, as the inhabitants can testify, frequently glows with light during the night.”¹³

Agilolf's ferocious and cruel death was transformed into a beautiful religious message, as the landscape of his death, changed from peaceful to violent through the actions of the beastly guards, again became a pastoral haven through the power of God.

The Forest Battle as the Final Clash of Representations

The final narrative phase of the *Passio* is Charles Martel's victory over the rebels through the use of forest camouflage. Just as the forest becomes the proving ground of Agilolf's sanctity, it is also the site of a battle that tests Charles's resolve. In the moment of martyrdom, the beautiful forest is part of a divine wilderness, linked to solitude, trial, and the desert. In the heat of the battle, that same forest is tied instead to human agency and endeavor; frightening and dangerous, the forest is nonetheless part of the human control and transformation of nature.

The opening of the passage focuses on the moment of calm in spite of a hostile environment. The site of the battle was "densely surrounded by shady forests and with mountains fit for building fortresses on."¹⁴ Yet as the armies prepare for the final conflict, "a peaceful time arrived; the depths of the woods (*silva*) clothed themselves in flowers and leaves." Like the day of Agilolf's death, here, too, the author presents the woods in a way that draws attention to their beauty and peacefulness. The enemy troops were affected by the calm, and began to relax. However, as was the case when Agilolf was killed, the natural peace was shattered by human violence.

Unbeknownst to the rebels, Charles Martel had amassed a large group of soldiers at the edge of the Ardennes, and was planning an attack. The author shifts his representation of the forest again, here picturing it as a dangerous obstacle to Charles's troops, because of the presence of the evil men. Charles and his "armed men entered the Ardennes, not with the sounding of trumpets, but in silence," wrote the author. "After going into the woods that surrounded Amblève," Charles and his troops advanced carefully, "keep[ing] their weapons at hand" in case enemies lay in wait in the dark and frightening forest.¹⁵

As described in detail in [Chapter 4](#), Charles's army eventually overcame the treacherous forest that was sheltering his enemies by tearing it down and by transforming his troops into a moving forest. The troops tore off the branches of the trees, described as "dense with leaves and flowers" and having "thickly flowering and leafy branches," converting the forest into a weapon.¹⁶ Armed with the beautiful forest the "wondrous army" created "a wondrous façade." The images reinforce the earlier scene of Agilolf's martyrdom, when "the woods were in leaf, [and] the plants were bright with flowers." The use of beautiful images, of bright flowers and green leaves, and the language of wonder and amazement, reinforces the idea that, for those

who are working in God's interests, the forest was a beautiful and welcoming place.

The continuous juxtaposition of good and bad images of the forest and the natural world is reflected in the author's general narrative style. The *Passio* contains frequent narrative breaks and shifts of scene. One clear example of this occurs immediately after he describes Charles's plans to attack the fortress. The point of view flashes to the enemy camp and an image that again sets natural beauty and human fear directly against one another: "The beautiful brightness of the moon shone by night: horrible dreams terrorized Daniel and Ragamfred."¹⁷ They sent their counselors to look at the position of the stars to determine if there was danger; the men reported that all was well, and the tyrants returned to sleep. The author then interjects, "So divine justice ridiculed them, so that the spilling of innocent blood could be vindicated."¹⁸

The author's explanation of divine justice as partly responsible for manipulating perceptions of nature can be compared to the concluding scene of the *Passio*, when Charles Martel's camouflaged army marches on the enemy camp. In this instance, though the results are similar, it is an act of human artifice that lulls the enemy into a false sense of security. Indeed, Charles's agency in this (as opposed to God's control of the stars) is reinforced by the phrase "rex arboreus"; Charles, a king turned into a tree, is himself, via this camouflage, made king of the trees.¹⁹

As "rex arboreus," Charles converted the beautiful woods into a dangerous and frightening military weapon. This methodical, militaristic conversion of the forest to human purposes is one of the most important images that the monk of Malmedy provides. Through the tearing apart of the forest, the destruction of the flowering, leafy *locus amoenus*, the army also, at the same time, ripped apart the second forest, the harsh forest that served as a defensive barrier to the wicked men. Thereby both of the images of the forest are brought together in the final narrative scene. Throughout his work, the author of the *Passio* constructs (and then undermines) two different forest images.

The constructed, oppositional, and shifting images of the forest reflect and augment the fluidity of the technical terms seen in the charters and in other narrative sources and allow the author to construct two decidedly different views of the same space. Medieval authors were able to blend and blur technical terminology (or else to deal with the fact that the terminology itself was undefined) and to use words that appear to contain within themselves conflicting meanings. By surrounding flexible words with carefully constructed descriptions, the monks at Stavelot and Malmedy were able to foster a relationship with the forest that was deliberately contradictory.

The author of the *Passio* also reinforced the role of monastic interpretation and memory in shaping the religious landscape. When the

enemy guards plot against the saint, they claim to hope that through Agilolf's death, "his memory will be erased from the land." The author noted that indeed, in spite of God's miraculous preservation of the site, the place of Agilolf's death was nearly forgotten. He claimed that until he wrote the account, the relevance of the site of Agilolf's martyrdom had "fallen out of memory."²⁰ Only through the monks' deliberate reconstruction and preservation of historical and religious memory could the extent of God's presence in the religious and natural landscapes be understood. By telling these stories about the environment they lived in, the monks maintained their own prominence, reinforcing their economic control over the agricultural landscape, their religious control over the local residents, and even their self-identity and their relationship with God.

Timeline

882 Peace of God movement begins

1020-48 abbacy; final stages of the *Miracula Remacii* composed

1040 Oppo's church dedicated

1042 Remacle's tomb rediscovered, relics transferred to church

1049 Oppo opens Quirin's reliquary, confirming presence of multiple saints' relics

1049 Monks of Stavelot compile the *Annales Stabulenses*

1059 *Vita Remacii* written

1059 Henry IV gives Malmedy to Anno of Cologne, removes it from Stavelot's control.

Anno appoints Tegernon of Brauweiler as independent abbot of Malmedy (Theoderic remains abbot of Stavelot)

1071 Monks of Stavelot take Remacle's relics to the Easter Synod of Liege. On 9 May Emperor Henry IV restores Stavelot's primacy over Malmedy.

(exact level of debate): Monks at Stavelot produce the *Translatio Remacii*, Malmedy produces the *Passio Agilolfi* and *Translatio Quirini*, and Saint-Hubert compiles the second collection of Hubert's miracles.

1071 Completion of the Stavelot Bible

1115 Library catalog from Stavelot

1121 Anno of Logne becomes the first monk of Malmedy to be appointed as abbot of both houses.

1130-38 Malmedy abbacy

1130 Waldo compiles property and tithe list for the houses

1135 Bible commissioned—retells story of *vita Remacii* and lists properties

1136 Waldo appointed as abbot of Monte Cassino

1145 Waldo acquires new relics for Stavelot

1146 Waldo becomes abbot of Corvey

1146-47 Waldo's correspondence preserved in a "letter-book," not intended for publication

1150 Waldo's body buried at Stavelot, hermitage of Mie founded, first surviving vernacular charter for the houses

Handlist of Sources

outskirts of Paris to Malmedy.

Triumphus Remaculi (late eleventh century)

This source was written at the peak of the conflict with Anno over control of Malmedy. It consists of two books composed in separate stages. The first book relates the historical background of the conflict between Stavelot and Malmedy and the involvement of Anno of Cologne. The second book describes the events of 9 May 1071, when Remacle's relics were brought to Liège and helped sway Henry IV to restore Malmedy to Stavelot.

Vita Hadalini (late tenth century)

This biography of Hadalinus (one of Remacle's disciples and the founder of Chelles) written by Heriger of Lobbes (d. 1007).

Vita Huberti prima (between 706 and 727)

This life was written by an unknown monk before the saint was moved to Andages. Though produced at Liège, it set the stage for the later cult that would develop in the Ardennes.

Vita Huberti secunda (ninth century, after 825)

The second biography was written by Jonas of Orleans (ca. 780–843), and includes the story of the saint's translation. After the saint was moved to Andages/Saint-Hubert, a cult began to develop, and the monks began to record and broadcast stories of the miracles wrought by the saint.

Vita Popponis (ca. 1059–69)

The *vita Popponis* appears to have been written shortly after Poppo's death (ca. 1059). Both the Bollandists and Mabillon viewed a monk named Everhelm, the abbot of St. Amand and one of Poppo's disciples, as the sole author. In a more recent study, however, Paul Ladewig argues that an otherwise unknown monk named Onulf started the work around 1059 under Everhelm's orders, and that Everhelm then adapted it between 1065 and 1069.

Vita Remaculi prima (ca. 850)

This is the earliest narrative source for Remacle's life. It consists of two parts: the first encompasses Remacle's early religious career, and the second focuses on the foundation of Stavelot and Malmedy and the saint's death. Written by an unknown author, likely a monk of Stavelot.

Vita Remaculi (late tenth century)

The second hagiographical account of Remacle, written by Heriger of Lobbes (d. 1007), but commissioned by Notger, the Bishop of Liège, who wrote a prefatory letter for the work (and claimed authorship of the full *vita*). Heriger's *vita* is much longer than the *vita prima*, and provides substantially

more context for Remacle's life and career.

Wibald's letters (1146–54 and 1156/57)

The letter book survives in its original form and in Wibald's hand. It contains correspondence to and from Wibald (and some letters he wrote for third parties) and appears to have been continually maintained. Despite their importance, until recently the only comprehensive edition of the letters is that of the MGH's Phillip Jaffé, from 1864. A new MGH edition is in preparation by Martina Hartmann; though not yet published it is available through the MGH website. See <http://www.mgh.de/datenbanken/wibald-von-stablo/>, where a concordance is available.

Notes

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3. *Passio Agilolfi*, 1.3. Helga Müller-Kehlen, *Die Ardennen im Frühmittelalter: Untersuchungen zum Königsgut in einem karolingischen Kernland* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973), pp. 113–17, which includes a full list of medieval references to the village of Amel.

4. Though most references to Amel refer to it as a *villa*, a charter from around 670 names the site as "Amblava curtis," and it is also called a *locus* in another document. HR 6.Müller-Kehlen, *Die Ardennen*, p. 117.

5. *Passio Agilolfi*, 2; 1.3.

6. HR 141 (1105–19).

7. *Passio Agilolfi*, 1.3, 1.8.

8. For a more in-depth discussion of key directions and works, see my article "An Introduction to Medieval Environmental History," *History Compass* 6, no. 3 (2008): 898–916. A range of approaches can be seen in several volumes of collected essays: Barbara Hanawalt and Lisa J. Kiser, eds., *Engaging with Nature: Essays on the Natural World in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008); Scott G. Bruce, ed., *Ecologies and Economies in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2010); John Howe and Michael Wolfe, eds., *Inventing Medieval Landscapes: Senses of Place in Western Europe* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002).

9. Richard C. Hoffmann, "Footprint Metaphor and Metabolic Realities," in *Natures Past: The Environment and Human History*, ed. Paolo Squatriti (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), pp. 288–325; Rüdiger Glaser, *Klimageschichte Mitteleuropas: 1000 Jahre Wetter, Klima, Katastrophen* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2001); Christian Pfister, Rudolf Brázdil, and Rüdiger Glaser, eds., *Climatic Variability in Sixteenth-Century Europe and Its Social Dimension* (Berlin: Springer, 1999); Raymond S. Bradley, Malcolm K. Hughes, and Henry F. Diaz, "Climate in Medieval Time," *Science* 302, no. 5644 (2003): 404–5; Rudolf Brázdil, Christian Pfister, et al., "Historical Climatology in Europe—the State of the Art," *Climatic Change* 70 (2005): 363–430.

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15. Lynn White, Jr., "The Historic Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155 (1964): 1203–7. See also his collection of essays, *Medieval Religion and Technology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).
16. Wibald, *Epistolae* 155.
17. Elspeth Whitney, "History, Lynn White, and Ecotheology," *Environmental Ethics* 15 (1993): 151, 158.
18. Willis Jenkins, "After Lynn White: Religious Ethics and Environmental Problems," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 37.2 (2009): 283.
19. Whitney, "History, Lynn White, and Ecotheology." Jenkins, "After Lynn White," p. 284. Jenkins notes that the debate over White has largely been conducted by scholars in the fields of environmental ethics and environment and religion.
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21. Jeremy Cohen, "Be Fertile and Increase, Fill the Earth and Master It": *The Ancient and Medieval Career of a Biblical Text* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 5. Yet White's thesis continues to thrive, as indicated by the many citations to it over the past decade, and its largely uncritical inclusion in collected volumes, including as the opening essay in Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, eds., *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996).
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29. Richard Unger, "Introduction: Hoffmann in the Historiography of Environmental History," in *Ecologies and Economies in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Scott G. Bruce (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 14, 18.
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42. François Baix, *Etude sur l'abbaye et principauté de Stavelot-Malmédy* (Bruxelles: Editions Culture et Civilisation, 1981), Baix, "L'Hagiographie à Stavelot-Malmédy," *Revue Benedictine* 60 (1950): 120–62; Biax, "St. Remacle et les abbayes de Solignac et de Stavelot-Malmédy," *Revue Benedictine* 61 (1951): 167–207.

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55. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).
56. Barbara Rosenwein, *Rhinoceros Bound*; Rosenwein, *To Be the Neighbor of St. Peter*.
57. Karine Ugé, *Creating the Monastic Past in Medieval Flanders* (York: York Medieval Press, 2005), p. 1.
58. Balau, *Étude Critique*, pp. 226–27; Wilhelm Levison, "Bischof Agilolf von Köln und seine Passio," in *Aus Rheinischer und Fränkischer Frühzeit: ausgewählte Aufsätze von Wilhelm Levison* (Düsseldorf: Verlag L. Schwann, 1948), p. 92.
59. Rosamond McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 11.

60. An analysis of Remacle's name, which François Baix characterized as being a "Germanic barbarism," is found in Baix, *Étude sur l'abbaye*, pp. 123–24.

61. This included Remacle's disciple St. Lambert (d. 698/701), St. Amand (c. 584–675), and St. Hubert (ca. 658–727/28). Édouard DeMoreau, S.J., *Les Abbayes de Belgique (Vlle–XIIIe siècles)* (Brussels: La Renaissance du livre, 1952), pp. 7–9, 15; Müller-Kehlen, *Die Ardennen im Frühmittelalter*, pp. 29–31, 39.

62. Benoît van den Bossche, "Saint Remacle, moine: Eléments de biographie," in *Saint Remacle l'apôtre de l'Ardenne*, ed. Albert LeMeunier (Spa: ASBL fête de Saint-Remacle, 1995), pp. 47–53; Friedrich Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich* (Vienna: Oldenbourg, 1965), p. 268; C. H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism: Forms of Religious Life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages*, 3rd ed., ed. David Bates (New York: Longman, 2001), pp. 41, 48–51.

63. *Annales Stabulenses*, anno. 652, p. 41.

64. Baix, *Étude sur l'abbaye*, p. 28.

65. In 720, Liège would become the new see of the Tongres-Maastricht region, and in the ninth century a third diocese was added, centered on the bishopric of Trier. Müller-Kehlen, *Die Ardennen im Frühmittelalter*, pp. 57–58.

66. HR2. The most recent edition is MGH DD Mer. 1, pp. 205–7, where the editor proposes that this was a charter issued directly by Grimoald, and written "without a doubt composed more likely by a monk than by a chancery official." Ludwig Drees, *Der Heilige Remaclus: Gründer der Abtei Stavelot-Malmedy*, Schriftenreihe des Geschichtsvereins "Zwischen Venn und Schneifel" nr. 1 (St. Vith: M. Doepgen-Beretz, 1967), pp. 13–18.

67. In his introduction to the new edition of Merovingian charters, Theo Kölzer points out that with ten, Stavelot-Malmedy is the monastery with the second highest number of surviving Merovingian charters (after Saint-Denis, whose 54 charters include 27 spuria). Kölzer, "Einleitung," MGH DD Mer. 1, pp. xiv–xv.

68. HR5 (660). On the development of Stavelot-Malmedy's cult of saints, see [Chapter 5](#).

69. HR25, 26, and 29. *Miracula Remacii*, 1.5.

70. Baix, *Étude sur l'abbaye*, pp. 81, 87.

71. *Annales Stabulenses*, Anno 881.

72. Baix, *Étude sur l'abbaye*, p. 112; DeMoreau, *Les Abbayes de Belgique*, p. 38.

73. The *Vita Johannis Gorziensis* [MGH SS iv, 335–377, at 353]. Wehl, *Reichsabtei und König*, p. 213.

74. Baix, *Étude sur l'abbaye*, pp. 112, 27; Michel Margue, "Aspects politiques de la 'réforme' monastique en Lotharingie," *Revue Bénédictine* 108 (1988): 31–61; John Nightengale, *Monasteries and Patrons in the Gorze Reform: Lotharingia c. 850–1000* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), pp. 96, 102. For Cluny, see above, note 37.

75. Antoine Courtejoie, *Les Illustrations de Stavelot, et les vies des Saints Remacle, Thédart, Hadelin, Lambert, Hubert, Poppo et d'autres Grands Civilisateurs des Ardennes* (Brussels: Editions Culture et Civilisation, 1982), p. 123.

76. There are ten charters from the period, HR 64–73.

77. HR94, *Annales Stabulenses*, Anno 954: "Ungri populantur regiones Galliae."

78. For an early analysis of Stavelot's cartulary, see Karl Rieger, *Der Codex Stabulensis der k. Bibliothek zu Bamberg: eine kritische Untersuchung* (Wien: Selbstverlag des k. k. Franz-Joseph-Gymnasiums in der innen Stadt, 1882). On cartularies "cementing bonds," see Matthew Innes, *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages: The Middle Rhine Valley, 400–1000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 46, and Patrick Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), esp. pp. 100–107. See also Laurent Morelle, "The Metamorphosis of Three Monastic Charter Collections in the Eleventh Century (Saint-Amand, Saint-Riquier, Montier-en-Der)," in *Charters and the Use of the Written Word in Medieval Society*, ed. Karl Heidecker (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2000), pp. 171–204.

79. The *vita Remacii secunda* was edited by Surius in the AASS Sept. 3 and by Migne, PL 139, and in the MGH SRM 5, 11. This work draws on the AASS edition.

80. Baix, *Étude sur l'abbaye*, pp. 185–87. On Heriger, see Peter Verbist, “Heriger van Lobbes (ca. 942–1007) een laat-karolinger of een vroeg-scholasticus? Een historisch onderzoek naar de religieus-culturele wereld van Luik en Lobbes in de late tiende eeuw,” thesis, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 1996–97, esp. [chapter 3](#), “Herigers oeuvre.”

81. John W. Bernhardt, “*Servitium regis* and Monastic Property in Early Medieval Germany,” *Viator* 18 (1987): 80; Halkin and Roland, p. xxxv.

82. For a discussion of Poppo’s reform efforts, see Schäfer, “Studien zu Poppo,” and Wehl, *Reichsabtei und König*, p. 217.

83. Baix, *Étude sur l'abbaye*, p. 184. Wayne Dynes, *The Illuminations of the Stavelot Bible* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1978), p. 144. Balau, *Les sources de l’histoire*, p. 224. The catalog was published by Jean-Joseph Thonissen, “Une bibliothèque belge de l’an MCV,” *Bulletins de l’Académie Royale des sciences, des lettres et des beaux-arts de Belgique* Series 2, 23 (1867): 603–23.

84. HR 153, “abbas Poppo loci nostri depopulator.” This reference is also noted by Bernhardt, “*Servitium regis* and Monastic Property,” p. 80.

85. HR 147 (1128). Wehl, *Reichsabtei und König*, p. 220.

86. Jakobi, *Wibald von Stablo und Corvey*, pp. 15–16; Stiennon and Deckers, eds., *Exposition Wibald*, pp. 47, 11; Bastin, *Wibald, Abbé de Stavelot et Malmedy*; Stephan-Kühn, “Wibald als Abt von Stablo und Corvey; Wehl, *Reichsabtei und König*, p. 221; John Van Engen, *Rupert of Deutz* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

87. Wehl, *Reichsabtei und König*, p. 226. HR 163.

88. HR 163.

89. HR 156.

90. Stephan-Kühn, “Wibald als Abt von Stablo und Corvey,” pp. 19–20; Wehl, *Reichsabtei und König*, p. 224.

91. HR 238 and HR 240. Wehl, *Reichsabtei und König*, p. 226.

92. HR 171 from Innocent II (probably a forgery); HR 178 (1143) from Celestine II; HR 179 (1144) from Pope Lucius II; HR 182 (1146) from Eugenius III; HR 248 (1154) from Adrian IV. Stephan-Kühn, “Wibald als Abt von Stablo und Corvey,” p. 20.

93. Wehl, *Reichsabtei und König*, pp. 221–23.

94. Wibald was elected unanimously by the monks of Corvey on 20 October 1145, following the deposition of the former abbot. Alfred Haverkamp, *Aufbruch und Gestaltung Deutschland 1056–1273* (Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1984), pp. 104–5. *Chronographus Corbeiensis*, p. 48, and Wibald, *Epistolae* 34.

95. Holy Roman Emperors (Lothar III, Conrad III, Henry IV, and Frederick I “Barbarossa”) were principal correspondents, as were four popes: Celestine II, Eugenius III (and his chancellor, Cardinal Guido), Anastasius IV and his legates, and Adrian IV.

96. Wehl, *Reichsabtei und König*, p. 220. There are 189 other sources for which Wibald was author, dictator, participant, or witness. Many of these, though not all, were included by Jaffé in his edition, and Jakobi constructed a table that lists these in chronological order. Jakobi, *Wibald von Stablo und Corvey*, pp. 20–22.

97. In an 1149 letter to a fellow abbot, Wibald asks him to send two breeding pairs of rabbits. Wibald, *Epistolae* 176.

98. The Alexander reliquary is in the Musées Royaux in Brussels. The Remacle shrine is held at St.-Sebastien in Malmedy.

99. Charles Ryskamp, *The Stavelot Triptych: Mosan Art and the Legend of the True Cross* (New York: Pierpont Morgan Library, 1980); Rita Wardein Tekippe, “Procession, Piety, and Politics: Three Medieval Rheno-Mosan Reliquary Shrines and the Cult Communities for Bishop-Saints Servatius of Maastricht, Eleutherius of Tournai, and Remaclus of Stavelot,” Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1999, p. 141. This piece is now held at the Morgan Library and Museum in New York City.

100. Tekippe, “Procession, Piety, and Politics,” p. 222. Jakobi, *Wibald von Stablo und Corvey*, pp. 112, 16.

101. HR 250 and 251 (1159).
102. Jean Heuclin, *Aux Origines Monastiques de la Gaule du Nord: Ermites et reclus du Ve au XIe siècle* (Lille: Presses Universitaires de Lille, 1988); Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*; Henrietta Leyser, *Hermits and the New Monasticism: A Study of Religious Communities in Western Europe, 1000–1150* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984); Uta Ranke-Heinemann, *Das Frühe Mönchtum: Seine Motive nach den Selbstzeugnissen*. (Essen: Hans Driewer Verlag, 1964); Donald Weinstein and Rudolph M. Bell, *Saints and Society: The Two Worlds of Western Christendom, 1000–1700* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).
103. *Vita Sancti Bertuini*, as cited by Noël, "Pour une archéologie de la nature," pp. 766–68. Noël uses this example to discuss the ecology of the countryside.
104. AASS 21 Mai V, 71. Cited and translated by William J. Short, "Saints in the World of Nature: The Animal Story as Spiritual Parable in Medieval Hagiography (900–1200)," Ph.D. diss., Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1983, p. 11.
105. Heuclin, *Aux Origines Monastiques*, pp. 75–79, 87–88.
106. Peter Damian, "Vita Beati Romualdi," ed. Giovanni Tabacco, *Petri Daminai Vita Beati Romualdi*, Fonti per la storia d'Italia 94 (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano, 1957), 14. John Howe, "Creating Symbolic Landscapes: Medieval Development of Sacred Space," in *Inventing Medieval Landscapes: Senses of Place in Western Europe* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002), p. 211.
107. Corinne J. Saunders, *The Forest of Medieval Romance: Avernus, Broceliande, Arden* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993), p. 9, emphasis mine. Saunders's discussion of the Biblical Wilderness is a coherent and concise discussion of the problematic notion of *solitudine* and *desertus*.
108. Jacques Le Goff, "The Wilderness in the Medieval West," in *The Medieval Imagination*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 56.
109. Vito Fumagalli, *Landscapes of Fear: Perceptions of Nature and the City in the Middle Ages*, trans. Shayne Mitchell (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), p. 4.
110. Noël, "Moines et nature sauvage," p. 576.
111. Ewig, "Les Ardennes au haut moyen age," p. 537.
112. *Vita Berregisi*, ch. 17, 18. (AASS octob., vol. 1, 520ff), as cited in Balau, *Les sources de l'histoire*, p. 95. A foundation charter (which may be an eleventh-century forgery) acknowledges both an earlier Roman fort and a preexisting medieval church.
113. Howe, "Creating Symbolic Landscapes," p. 212.
114. Dominic Alexander, *Saints and Animals in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2008), pp. 38–39.
115. "Et praeterea locus silvaticus in heremo vastissimae solitudinis." Letter from 751, Urkundenbuch Fulda 13, as cited in Dieter von der Nahmer, "Klostergründung 'in solitudine'—ein Unbrauchbarer Hagiographischer Topos?" *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* 12 (1972): 101.
116. von der Nahmer, "Klostergründung in solitudine," pp. 110, 91, 96–99. Maria-Elisabeth Brunert, "Fulda als Kloster in eremo: Zentrale Quellen über die Gründung im Spiegel der hagiographischen Tradition," in *Kloster Fulda in der Welt der Karolinger und Ottonen*, ed. Gangolf Schrimpf (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Josef Knecht, 1996), pp. 59, 63–65. Von der Nahmer, "Klostergründung in solitudine," pp. 110, 91, 96–99.
117. A wide range of articles and approaches have been compiled in two volumes: J. Baird Callicott and Michael P. Nelson, eds., *The Great New Wilderness Debate* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988); and Callicott and Nelson, eds., *The Wilderness Debate Rages On* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008).
118. William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, ed. Cronon (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995), p. 89.
119. Le Goff, "The Wilderness in the Medieval West," p. 50.
120. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

1. Amy G. Remensnyder, *Remembering Kings Past: Monastic Foundation Legends in Medieval Southern France* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 2.

2. HR2 (ca. 648), “in quibus caterva bestiarum germinat.”

3. *Ibid.*, “ut ibidem familia Dei vel custodes ejusdem ecclesiae quieto ordine contemplativam vitam agere deberent juxta monitionem divinam.”

4. *Ibid.*, “ob cavenda pericula animarum inhabitantium et ad devitanda consortia mulierum ... ut absque impressione populi vel tumultuatione saeculari Deo soli vacarent.” This sentiment is also expressed in the *Vita Remacii*, c. 20: “quo deinceps quietius viverent et absque vicinorum impressione soli Deo liberius vacarent.”

5. HR 4 (652–53), “vasta heremi Ardenensis.”

6. HR 16 (744?), “foreste nostra Ardinna”; “turba plurima monachorum” “pro tranquillitate pacis conceditur.”

7. Karl Heidecker, ed., *Charters and the Use of the Written Word in Medieval Society* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2000), p. 5.

8. MGH SS rer Merov. 5, 104 ff. *Vita Remacii*, “Commentarius Praevius,” AASS, 692–96.

9. *Vita prima*, c. 2.

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ibid.*, “tradiderunt [eidem] ex ipsa foreste duodecim leucas in longitudine, similiter et in latitudine; in quo spatio nullus contradictor existeret suae ditioni vel succedentium ei, ut quiete Deo militarent.” HR 2: “mensurarentur spatia dextrorum saltibus non plus duodecim milibus, ut absque impressione populi vel tumultuationi saeculari Deo soli vacarent.”

12. *Vita prima*, c. 2.

13. *Vita Remacii*, c. 13.

14. HR 1 (ca. 644), “in honore patroni nostri Petri, Pauli, Johannis, vel ceterorum martyrum, in terra nostra silva Ardenense in loco qui dicitur Casecongildunus quem Sesomiris fluvius cingere videtur.” This is also no. 80 in the MGH DD Mer.1, pp. 202–4, where Kölzer points out the many problems with the charter’s transmission that suggest it is a heavily reworked charter possibly (as with HR 2) originating with Grimoald rather than the royal chancery. Nevertheless, as subsequent discussion will show, the monks of Stavelot remembered this as a royal concession.

15. *Vita Remacii*, c. 10, “In eo loco quem Cosecongildunum vocant, ad Sesmarum fluvium, idem rex, procerum consilio, in honorem apostolorum Petri et Pauli atque Joannis coenobium condidit, quod aptus videretur is locus monachorum habitatione.”

16. *Vita Remacii*, c. 11, “opera in rupe excisus”; “sola Arduenna”; “in arduis sita montibus.”

17. The Cugnon charter is HR 1. On Cugnon, see François Baix, *Étude sur l’abbaye et principauté de Stavelot-Malmédy* (Belgium: Carleroi, 1924), pp. 17–18; Hans-Peter Wehlt, *Reichsabtei und König: dargestellt am Beispiel der Abtei Lorsch mit Ausblicken auf Hersfeld, Stablo und Fulda* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1970), p. 128; Antoine Courtejoie, *Les Illustrations de Stavelot, et les vies des Saints Remacle, Thédart, Hadelin, Lambert, Hubert, Poppo et d’autres Grands Civilisateurs des Ardennes* (Brussels: Editions Culture et Civilisation, 1982), p. 13.

18. HR 1, “quod aptus videretur is locus monachorum habitationi et instituto.” This site became a part of the local religious landscape; it still exists as a pilgrimage site known as the Caves of St. Remacle.

19. *Vita Hadalini*, c. 2, “quod semper habuit in voto, remotioris scilicet vitae solitudinem.”

20. *Vita Hadalini*, c. 4, 6.

21. Wibald, *Epistolae* 334, “in nostra veteri nemorum solitudine.” A general note on translations: Wibald was in the custom of writing his letters in the third-person plural. He

himself explained this practice in a letter to a scholar, Manegold. He wrote that “I am now going against my own custom by writing in the first person, because we are accustomed to speaking along with our monks, in the third person.” Wibald, *Epistolae* 167. When it is clear that Wibald is referring to himself rather than to the group of monks, I have usually chosen to translate his words into the first-person singular.

22. Ibid., 159, “si remotissimam heremum habitaremus.”

23. Another of the Stavelot sources also includes a (not typical) representation of the lion as evil. Pope Eugenius III wrote to Wibald, praising his abbatial duties, and his care and prayers that ensured “that the lion, seeking by what means he might devour them, will find no fit occasion for tearing them to pieces.” Wibald, *Epistolae* 148.

24. Vito Fumagalli, *Landscapes of Fear: Perceptions of Nature and the City in the Middle Ages*, trans. Shayne Mitchell (Great Britain: Polity Press, 1994), pp. 4, 9.

25. Caesar, *De Bello Gallica*, ed. and trans. Henry John Edwards, Loeb Classical Library (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1917), book 5, pp. 237–38.

26. Caesar, *De Bello Gallica*, book 6, pp. 360–62.

27. Tacitus, *Germania*, book 16, 68; book 10, 62–63; and book 40, 90.

28. Wibald, *Epistolae* 62; *vita Popponis*, c. 4.

29. *Passio Agilolfi*, c. 1.6.

30. *Annales Stabulenses*, a. 872.

31. Michael McCormick, Paul Edward Dutton, and Paul A. Mayewski, “Volcanoes and the Climate Forcing of Carolingian Europe, A.D. 750–950,” *Speculum* 82 (2007): 886–87. The translation of Hincmar of Reims, *Annales de Saint-Bertin*, is found on 886.

32. *Translatio Quirini*, c. 2.14.

33. *Miracula Huberti I*, c. 1.6.

34. The first tale does not provide a date, though it notes that Sevold was the abbot. The “datum” clause of the second version seems confident, but there are some problems with its details, as Satoshi Tada points out in “The Creation of a Religious Centre: Christianisation in the Diocese of Liège in the Carolingian Period,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 54, no. 2 (April 2003): 226.

35. *Miracula Huberti II*, c. 1.6.

36. Ibid.

37. Paul Edward Dutton, “Thunder and Hail over the Carolingian Countryside,” in *Charlemagne’s Mustache and Other Cultural Clusters of a Dark Age* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 169–88.

38. *Miracula Huberti II*, c. 1.16.

39. *Vita Landiberti bp. Traiectensis*, MGH SS rer. Merov. 6, cap., 409.

40. *Vita Remacli*, c. 19.

41. *Vita Remacli*, c. 5.

42. See, for example, Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 1994); David Salter, *Holy and Noble Beasts: Encounters with Animals in Medieval Literature* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2001); and William J. Short, “Saints in the World of Nature: The Animal Story as Spiritual Parable in Medieval Hagiography (900–1200),” Ph.D. diss., Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1983.

43. Paul Edward Dutton, “Charlemagne, King of Beasts,” in *Charlemagne’s Mustache and Other Cultural Clusters of a Dark Age* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 44.

44. René Noël, “Moines et nature sauvage: dans l’Ardenne du haut moyen âge (St. Remacle à Cugnon et à Stavelot-Malmedy),” in *Villes et campagnes au Moyen Age: Mélanges Georges Despy*, ed. M. Duvoisquel and A. Dierkens (Liège: Le Perron, 1966), p. 588.

45. On tracking medieval wolves in historical and archaeological records, see Aleksander Pluskowski, *Wolves and the Wilderness in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2006), esp. [chapter 1](#). Claude Tainturier, “Les loups dans les Ardennes sous la Révolution et le 1er Empire,” *Etudes Ardennaises* 32 (January–March 1963): 37.

46. Michel Rouche, “The Early Middle Ages in the West,” in *History of Private Life: From*

Pagan Rome to Byzantium, ed. Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 489.

47. Jon Coleman, *Vicious: Wolves and Men in America* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2004).

48. *Vita Popponis*, c. 7.

49. *Ibid.*

50. Wibald, *Epistolae* 79.

51. *Vita Remacii*, c. 21.

52. *Vita Remacii*, c. 17. This passage refers to but does not directly quote John 10:13 on the good shepherd.

53. Wibald, *Epistolae* 103, “Videbamus itaque non lupum unum venientem, nisi forte totam demonum phalangem unum lupum intelligamus, set multorum luporum innumerabiles exercitus, qui ad devorandam Stabulensem ecclesiam et magnam partem Lotharingiae efferata rabie inhiaverant. Sed misit Deus Spiritum sanctum de coelo et conclusit ora leonum.”

54. Malcolm Barber, trans., *Bestiary* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 1992), pp. 69–70.

55. Wibald, *Epistolae* 312. Robert also describes the monastery as Wibald’s “mother, teacher, and spouse” and tells Wibald, “you could never desert the cares of your brothers, or your sons, no less the adopted than the blood relatives.”

56. *Ibid.*

57. Wibald, *Epistolae* 159. Jaffé points out that the passage was borrowed from both Terence and Suetonius.

58. *Vita Popponis*, c. 7.

59. *Miracula Remacii*, c. 15, “Nam verbi gratia lupi atque ursi acerbi per portas Viennae urbis violenter irrumpentes, plurimos devoraverunt per annum integrum.” This story is explored in greater detail in [Chapter 5](#).

60. Barber, *Bestiary*, p. 70.

61. *Passio Agilolfi*, c. 1.8.

62. Sylvain Balau, *Les Sources de l’histoire du pays de Liège au Moyen Age: Etude critique* (Brussels: L’Académie Royale des Sciences, des Lettres et des Beaux-arts de Belgique, 1903), p. 114.

63. *Translatio Quirini*, p. 18.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

65. Cited and translated by Corinne J. Saunders, *The Forest of Medieval Romance: Avernus, Broceliande, Arden* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993), p. 17.

66. *Miracula Remacii*, c. 2.10, “nam dum monasterii solitudinem providet.”

67. *Miracula Remacii*, c. 2. 2.

68. *Ibid.*

69. Albert D’Haenens, *Les Invasions normandes en Belgique au IXe siècle; le phénomène et sa répercussion dans l’historiographie médiévale*, Recueil de travaux d’histoire et de philologie vol. 4, 38 (Louvain: Publications Universitaires de Louvain, 1967), p. 51.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

71. D’Haenens, *Les Invasions normandes*, 77. *Libellus miraculorum s. Bertini* ch. 11, as cited by Heinrich Fichtenau, “Wald und Walnutzung,” in *Beiträge zur Mediävistik: Ausgewählte Aufsätze* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1986), p. 117.

72. Wibald, *Epistolae* 195.

73. *Translatio Quirini*, c. 24, “viriditatem sui perpetuo conservat gramine, ut nec aestivo exuratur fervor nec hiemali adimatur frigore.”

74. In addition to those discussed in more detail below, see the important study by Charles Higounet, “Les forêts de l’Europe occidentale du Ve au XIe siècle,” in *Agricoltura e mondo rurale in Occidente nell’alto medioevo*, Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull’alto medioevo, XIII (Spoleto: Presso la sede del Centro 1966), pp. 343–98. For a more recent approach that emphasizes Norman rather than English legal terminology, see Dolly

Jørgensen, "The Roots of the English Royal Forest," in *Anglo-Norman Studies 32: Proceedings of the Battle Conference 2009*, ed. Chris Lewis (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010), pp. 114–28.

75. Matthew Johnson, *Behind the Castle Gate: From Medieval to Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 11.

76. Anton Gurevich, *Categories of Medieval Culture*, trans. G. L. Campbell (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), p. 51.

77. Paolo Squatriti, "Trees, Nuts and Wood at the End of the First Millennium: A Case from the Amalfi Coast," in *Ecologies and Economies in Medieval and Early Modern History: Studies in Environmental History for Richard C. Hoffmann*, ed. Scott G. Bruce (Leiden: Brill, 2010), p. 31.

78. Thomas Zotz, "Beobachtungen zu Königtum und Forst im früheren Mittelalter," in *Jagd und höfischen Kultur in Mittelalter*, ed. Werner Rosener (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), p. 97.

79. Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 62; Saunders, *The Forest of Medieval Romance*, pp. 24–25.

80. Rubner, "Vom römischen Saltus," p. 273.

81. Joseph Semmler, "Der Forst des König," in *Der Wald in Mittelalter und Renaissance*, ed. idem. (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1991), p. 145.

82. Chris Wickham, "European Forests in the Early Middle Ages: Landscape and Land Clearance," in *L'ambiente vegetale nell'alto medioevo: 30 marzo–5 aprile 1989*, Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 37, 2 (Spoleto: Presso la Sede del Centro, 1990), p. 486.

83. Georges Duby, *Rural Economy and Country Life in the Medieval West*, trans. Cynthia Postan (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), p. 144.

84. Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, ed. Stephen A. Barney et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 14.8. "saltus sunt vasta et silvestria loca, ubi arbores exsiliunt in altum."

85. HR 1 from 644, HR 2 from 648, and HR 4 from 652–53. The only scholars to note the diversity of vocabulary in these charters are Zotz, "Beobachtungen zu Königtum und Forst," and Sönke Lorenz, "Der Königsforst (forestis) in den Quellen der Merowinger und Karolingerzeit. Prolegomena zu einer Geschichte mittelalterlicher Nutzwälder," in *Mönchtum–Kirche–Herrschaft 750–1000*, ed. Dieter R. Bauer et al. (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1998), pp. 267–68.

86. Richard Keyser, "The Transformation of Traditional Woodland Management: Commercial Sylviculture in Medieval Champagne," *French Historical Studies* 32 (2009): 362.

87. HR 1 (664); HR 2 (648).

88. HR 4 (652–53).

89. Noël, "Moines et nature sauvage," p. 572. Noël used the CETEDOC data, and found thirty uses of the term "Ardenne."

90. HR 2. Zotz, "Beobachtungen zu Königtum und Forst," p. 96.

91. The linguistic origins of *forestis* (either Latinate or Germanic) has also been a hotly contested issue, sometimes linked with modern nationalism. For a summary, see Rudolf Schützeichel, "Bezeichnungen für 'Forst' und 'Wald' im frühen Mittelalter," *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 87 (1956/57): 109–17.

92. Lorenz, "Der Königsforst (forestis)," p. 276.

93. Helga Müller-Kehlen, *Die Ardenne im Frühmittelalter: Untersuchungen zum Königsgut in einem karolingischen Kernland* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973), p. 102; HR 6.

94. Lorenz, "Der Königsforst (forestis)," p. 274.

95. Roland Bechmann, *Trees and Man: The Forest in the Middle Ages*, trans. Katharyn Durham (New York: Paragon House, 1990), p. 13.

96. F. W. M. Vera, *Grazing Ecology and Forest History* (Oxon, UK: CABI Publishing), p. 104–5.

97. Fichtenau, "Wald und Waldnutzung," p. 118.
98. Richard Hayman, *Trees: Woodlands and Western Civilization* (London: Hambledon and London, 2003), p. 23.
99. Wickham, "European Forests," p. 485.
100. Schützeichel, "Bezeichnungen für 'Forst'," p. 113.
101. Lorenz, "Der Königsforst (forestis)," pp. 275–77, 284.
102. Keyser, "The Transformation of Traditional Woodland Management," pp. 361–62.
103. Ibid., p. 263. "Gebiet unter Königsrecht."
104. Bechmann, *Trees and Man*, p. 4.
105. Hans Thimme, "Forestis. Königsgut und Königsrecht nach den Forsturkunden vom 6. bis 12. Jahrhundert," *Archiv für Urkundenforschung* 2 (1909): 101–55.
106. Rubner, "Vom römischen *Saltus*," p. 274.
107. Wickham, "European Forests," p. 485.
108. Schützeichel, "Bezeichnungen für 'Forst'," pp. 114, 116. This reflects Semmler's points about the meaning of *saltus*.
109. Christoph Sonnlechner, "The Establishment of New Units of Production in Carolingian Times: Making Early Medieval Sources Relevant for Environmental History," *Viator* 35 (2004): 43, 29–30.
110. James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 2.
111. Matthew Innes, *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages: The Middle Rhine Valley, 400–1000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 5–6.
112. Theo Kölzer, MGH DD Mer. 1, pp. 203, 206–7.
113. Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
114. Semmler, "Der Forst des König," p. 144.
115. Schützeichel, "Bezeichnungen für 'Forst'," p. 105.
116. *Waldus*, a Latinization of the Germanic *wald*, appears in charters as early as 746, including an 8 November 816 charter from Prüm. Heinrich Beyer, L. Eltester, and A. Goerz, eds., *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der mittelrheinischer Territorien* (New York, 1974: reprint of original pub. in 1870), vol. 1, no. 51. Fluctuations between Latinate and Germanic words and place-name elements seem to be particularly pronounced in the sources from Prüm, including the Urbar, which contained so many regional and vernacular words that glosses were already necessary by the thirteenth century.
117. Léopold Delisle, ed., *Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France* (Paris: Palmé, 1870), 6:648. A hand-drawn copy of the ninth-century manuscript was published as Pierre Carpentier, ed., *Alphabetum tironianum seu notas Tironis explicandi methodus* (Paris: H. L. Guerin, & J. Guerin, 1747), p. 57.
118. The only exception to this is one final use of the term to describe the Ardennes in a royal confirmation of 1089. HR 126.
119. Noël, "Pour une archéologie de la nature," pp. 788, 781–82. For the period to 1000, 163 works were used and 851,399 words identified. Paul Tombeur, *Thesaurus linguae scriptorum operumque latino-belgicorum Medii Aevi, Première partie: Le vocabulaire, des origines à l'an mil* (Brussels: Académie Royale de Belgique, 1986).
120. HR 2 (648).
121. Lorenz, "Der Königsforst (forestis)," pp. 266–67.
122. HR 10 and 11.
123. HR 25 (814), HR 6 (670).
124. Two exceptions to this come from documents from the monks of St. Martin's at Metz that are preserved in Stavelot's cartulary, including a charter noting that the *forestis* at Leithforest was used by the residents of the city of Metz. The location of the forest is now unknown. HR 78 and HR 42 (885).
125. HR 1 (ca. 664).

126. HR 126 (1089), “infra forestem nostram in saltu Arduennae.”
127. Semmler, “Der Forst des König,” p. 144, and Lorenz, “Der Königsforst (forestis),” pp. 275–77.
128. *Vita Remacli*, preface.
129. Judith McClure and Roger Collins, eds., *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People; The Greater Chronicle; Bede’s Letter to Egbert*, trans. Bertram Colgrave (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 9.
130. Hugh G. Evelyn White, “Introduction,” in *Ausonius*, ed. White (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961), vol. 1, pp. vii–xiv; xvii–iii.
131. Ausonius, “The Moselle,” in *Ausonius*, ed. White, vol. 1, pp. 227, 231.
132. *Ibid.*, 257.
133. On Fortunatus, see Judith W. George, *Venantius Fortunatus: A Latin Poet in Merovingian Gaul* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), and Michael Roberts, *The Humblest Sparrow: The Poetry of Venantius Fortunatus* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009). For analysis of the connections between Fortunatus’s Mosel Poems and Ausonius’s *The Moselle*, see Michael Roberts, “The Description of Landscape in the Poetry of Venantius Fortunatus: The Moselle Poems,” *Traditio* vol. 49 (1994): 1–22.
134. Roberts, “The Description of Landscape,” p. 3.
135. On Fortunatus as a hagiographer and his connections to Gregory of Tours, see Raymond Van Dam, *Saints and Their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), esp. pp. 142–43 and 28–35.
136. Venantius Fortunatus, *Opera Poetica MGH Auct. Antiq.* IV.1., 3. 12. Translation mine.
137. Translated by Judith W. George, *Venantius Fortunatus: Personal and Political Poems* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995), 3. 13, p. 1.
138. Trans. by *ibid.*, 5.2, p. 19.
139. Trans. by *ibid.*, 10.9, p. 100.
140. Trans. by *ibid.*, p. 101.
141. Trans. by *ibid.*, pp. 99, 101.
142. Trans. by *ibid.*, 3.13, p. 3.
143. Poem 7.4. Translated by Roberts, *The Humblest Sparrow*, pp. 257–58, which also includes the Latin text for the translated sections.
144. *Ibid.*
145. *Vita Berengisi*, AASS Oct., I (1765), c. 2.17.
146. *Translatio Quirini*, c. 2.20.

CHAPTER 2. CONTROLLING THE DOMESTICATED LANDSCAPE

1. Constance Brittain Bouchard, *Holy Entrepreneurs: Cistercians, Knights, and Economic Exchange in Twelfth-Century Burgundy* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991); Edmund King, *Peterborough Abbey, 1086–1310: A Study of the Land Market* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973).
2. Constance Hoffman Berman, *The Cistercian Evolution: The Invention of a Religious Order in Twelfth-Century Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), p. 111.
3. John Van Engen, “The ‘Crisis of Coenobitism’ Reconsidered: Benedictine Monasticism in the Years 1050–1150,” *Speculum* 61, no. 2 (1986): 269–304.
4. Giovanni Hoyois, *L’Ardenne et l’Ardennais. L’évolution économique et sociale d’une région*, vol. 1 (Brussels: J. Duculot Press, 1949), p. 57, n. 4.
5. J. V. Thirgood, *Man and the Mediterranean Forest: A History of Resource Depletion* (London: Academic Press, 1981). Donald J. Hughes and J. V. Thirgood, “Deforestation, Erosion, and Forest Management in Ancient Greece and Rome,” *Journal of Forest History* vol. 26, 2 (April 1982): 60–75.
6. Philippe Gérard, “Etude de l’évolution forestière dans la principauté de Stavelot et dans le comté de Salm,” *Bulletin de la Société Royale Forestière de Belgique* (April 1951): 136.

7. Marc Bloch, *French Rural History: An Essay on Its Basic Characteristics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), p. 7.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

9. Georges Duby, *Rural Economy and Country Life in the Medieval West*, trans. Cynthia Postan (Philadelphia, 1998), p. 143. The example employed by both historians is that of Abbot Suger being unable, in 1130, to find the size and length of beams that he needed nearby, and being forced to seek them far beyond his holdings.

10. Oliver Rackham, *Ancient Woodland: Its History, Vegetation and Uses in England* (London, 1980); Rackham, *The Last Forest: The Story of Hatfield Forest* (London: Dent, 1989); A. T. Grove and Oliver Rackham, "Natural Vegetation in Historic Times," in *The Nature of Mediterranean Europe: An Ecological History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 167–89.

11. This does not include references to the larger "Ardenne."

12. For previous work on the Urbar, see Ludolf Kuchenbuch, *Bäuerliche Gesellschaft Und Klosterherrschaft Im 9. Jahrhundert: Studien Zur Sozialstruktur Der Familia Der Abtei Prüm* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1978). For discussion of the Urbar in a broader source context, see Dieter Hägermann, "Eine Grundherrschaft des 13. JH. im Spiegel des Frühmittelalters: Caesarius von Prüm und seine kommentierte Abschrift des Urbars von 893," *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter* 45 (1981): 1–34.

13. Godefroid Kurth, ed., *Chartes de l'abbaye de Saint-Hubert en Ardenne* (Brussels: Academie Royale de Belgique, 1903), no. 118, pp. 150–51 and no. 119, pp. 152–53.

14. HR 145.

15. HR 144. "lignorum ad edificandum." HR 250 (1159) also includes a *silva* where there are rights to "lignis ad edificiorum opus."

16. Urbar, p. 27 (on folio 12, not associated with any chapters).

17. This is larger than a modern cord, which measures 4 x 4 x 8.

18. Urbar cap. 19, p.27 and cap. 1, p. 20.

19. Urbar cap. 1, p. 21.

20. *Ibid.*

21. Urbar, cap. 10 and 11, p. 26.

22. HR29 (827), HR 144, "lignorum ad comburendum."

23. On charcoal, see William Linnard, "Historical Importance of Charcoal Burning in the Woodlands of Wales," in *École Nationale du Génie Rural des Eaux et des Forêts (ENGREF) Actes*, vol. 1: 206–16.

24. Rackham, *Trees and Woodland*, here p. 8. On coppicing, see Julian Evans, "Coppice Forestry—An Overview," in *Ecology and Management of Coppice Woodlands*, ed. G. P. Buckley (New York: Chapman and Hall, 1992), 18–27. On pollarding, see Péter Szabó, "There Is Hope for a Tree: Pollarding in Hungary," *Medium Aevum Quotidianum* 44 (2001): 41–60.

25. This is Richard Keyser's term: "Common Rights? Conflicts over the Usage of Woodlands in Later Medieval France," paper presented at the 43rd International Congress on Medieval Studies, May 8–11, 2008.

26. Rackham, *Trees and Woodland*, p. 39.

27. Julian Evans, "Coppice Forestry—An Overview," p. 19.

28. Rackham, *The Last Forest*, p. 75. Bechmann, *Trees and Man*, p. 153. See also Linnard, "Historical Importance of Charcoal Burning."

29. Urbar, c. 24, p. 31.

30. Urbar, c. 55, p.47; c.112, p.63, and 116, p. 64.

31. Urbar, commentary to c. 9, p. 25.

32. Urbar, c. 32, p. 36.

33. Urbar, c. 48, p. 45. The length of the boards is not recorded.

34. HR 118, Wibald, *Epistolae* 256.

35. HR 43 (891); HR 53 (915), "silva ad saginandum porcos D"; HR 57 (927), "silva ad saginandum porcos CC."

36. Urbar, pp. 46–47.
37. Urbar, c. 10, p.26
38. Rackham, *Trees and Woodland in the British Landscape*, pp. 48–49.
39. “silva in qua juxta estimationem saginari possunt porci L,” Jean-Pierre Devroey, *Le polyptyque et les listes de biens*, c. 5. The polyptych was produced in several stages from 868–965.
40. Ibid., c. 9, 14–15.
41. HR172 (1140).
42. HR165 (1138).
43. Delescaille, “Nature Conservation and Pastoralism in Wallonia,” pp. 39–52.
44. HR 10.
45. Kurth, *Chartes de l’abbaye de Saint-Hubert*, no. 63, pp. 80–81.
46. Nolden, Reiner, ed., *Das “Goldene Buch” von Prüm (Liber aureus Prumiensis)* (Trier: Geschichtsverein “Prümer Land” e.V., 1997), no. 17, p. 268.
47. Kurth, *Chartes de l’abbaye de Saint-Hubert*, no. 46, pp. 56–57.
48. HR 138. There was also a lengthy dispute over the properties belonging to the church of Braz (HR 133 and 143).
49. Fichtenau uses the German “Pertinenzformeln” to refer to holdings lists. Heinrich Fichtenau, “Wald und Waldnutzung,” in *Beiträge zur Mediävistik: Ausgewählte Aufsätze* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1986), pp. 108–10.
50. Daniel Lord Smail, *Imaginary Cartographies: Possession and Identity in Late Medieval Marseille* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999).
51. HR 9, HR 3.
52. Kurth, *Chartes de l’abbaye de Saint-Hubert*, no. 1.
53. See HR 119 (1088); 136 (1105); 104 (ca. 1045); and 84 (975).
54. HR 43 (891).
55. Ibid.
56. HR 153 (1130–31); HR 145; Wibald, *Epistolae* 405; HR 174 (1140). HR 154 (ca. 1131).
57. Wibald, *Epistolae* 419 and 420.
58. Rackham, *Ancient Woodland*, pp. 81–85; Bechmann, *Trees and Man*, pp. 15–42.
59. *Vita Hadalini*, c.5 and *Vita Remacii*, c. 18.
60. Urbar, c. 103, p.60, c.24, p. 32.
61. Bechmann, *Trees and Man*, pp. 188–98.
62. HR 144 (1126), “petra pro quadrata”; HR 1.
63. Urbar, cap 41, p. 38. On saltworks on the Seille, see L. Olivier and J. Kovacik, “The ‘Briquetage de la Seille’ (Lorraine, France); Proto-industrial Salt Production in the European Iron Age,” *Antiquity* 80 (2006): 558–66; and Mark Kurlansky, *Salt: A World History* (New York: Walker, 2002), pp. 149–50.
64. On the role of rivers and river ecosystems see Richard C. Hoffmann, “Elemental Resources and Aquatic Ecosystems: Medieval Europeans and Their Rivers,” in *Rivers and Society: From the Birth of Agriculture to Modern Times*, ed. Terje Tvedt and Richard Cooley (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), pp. 165–202.
65. Urbar, c. 24, pp. 30–31.
66. HR 4 (652–53). A discussion of the charter’s status as forgery is in Theo Kolzer’s new edition of the Merovingian charters, MGH DD Mer. 1, 477–78.
67. *Vita Remacii*, c. 20. On the ways that hagiographical works can present and give legitimacy to forgeries, see Walter Goffart, *The Le Mans Forgeries: A Chapter from the History of Church Property in the Ninth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966).
68. The following discussion is drawn from my article “Engineering Miracles: Water Control, Conversion, and the Creation of a Religious Landscape in the Medieval Ardennes,” *Environment and History* 13.4 (November 2007): 477–502. This is anthologized in Sarah Johnson, ed., *Landscapes (Themes in Environmental History)* (Cambridge, UK: White Horse Press, 2010), pp. 148–72.

69. HR 1 (ca. 644); HR 141 (1105–119).
70. HR 118 (1087); HR 145.
71. *Miracula Remacli*, c. 1. 18. Hoffmann, “Economic Development and Aquatic Ecosystems,” p. 636, n.18.
72. Urbar, c. 33, p. 36.
73. Paul Benoit and Joséphine Rouillard, “Medieval Hydraulics in France,” in *Working with Water in Medieval Europe*, ed. Paolo Squatriti (London: Brill, 2000), pp. 169–71; Richard Holt, “Medieval England’s Water-Related Technologies,” in *Working with Water in Medieval Europe*, ed. Squatriti, pp. 57–58. Dietrich Lohrmann, “Le moulin à eau dans le cadre de l’économie rurale de la Neustrie,” in *La Neustrie: Les pays au nord de la Loire de 650 à 850*, vol. 1, ed. Hartmut Atsma (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1989), p. 368.
74. Urbar, c. 45, p. 39.
75. Kurth, *Chartes de l’abbaye de Saint-Hubert*, nos. 49, 63, and 92.
76. *Ibid.* nos. 57, 72–74.
77. HR 68 (947); HR 74.
78. HR 27, HR 76, and HR 88.
79. HR 43.
80. Urbar c. 52.
81. Urbar, c. 48.
82. HR 118.
83. HR 145; HR 8. “agros ad cultus annonarum.”
84. For an example of the kind of detailed environmental analysis that can be done with later houses, see the work of Philip Slavin, an overview of which is “Feeding the Brethren: Grain Provisioning of Norwich Cathedral Priory, c. 1270–1380 [summary of a doctoral dissertation],” *Journal of Economic History* 70, no. 2 (2010): 446–50.
85. Urbar c. 1, p. 22.
86. *Miracula Remacli*, 1.18. Calchus also appears in the second book of the miracle collection, 2.2. This discussion is drawn from my article, “Engineering Miracles,” pp. 489–90.
87. The following discussion is drawn from HR 145.
88. This is described in Jacques Stiennon and Joseph Deckers, eds., *Exposition Wibald, abbé de Stavelot-Malmédy et de Corvey (1130–1158): catalogue* (Stavelot: Musée de l’ancienne Abbaye, 1982), pp. 85–90. See also Joseph Bastin’s chapter “Wibald et le comté de Logne,” in *Wibald, Abbé de Stavelot et Malmédy du Mont-Cassin et de Corbie; biographie publiée à l’occasion du 8e centenaire de son élévation à la dignité d’abbé de Stavelot* (Verviers: G. Leens, 1931), pp. 27–31.
89. HR 143.
90. HR 165, “Verum quoniam solitudo quedam erat circa castellum et edifitia.”
91. HR 128, “Mons autem ille asper erat et incultus, nulla quidem utilitate proficiuus.”
92. HR 134, “et quod omnibus erat infructuosum, multis in usum tam nostre ecclesie quam sue convertit.”
93. Matthew Innes, *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages: The Middle Rhine Valley, 400–1000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 42.
94. HR 66 and 67.
95. The list as it appeared on the retable is published as HR 159.
96. For further discussion of the retable, see [Chapter 5](#).
97. Bastin, *Wibald, Abbé de Stavelot et Malmédy*, p. 21.
98. HR2, “in utrorumque partibus monasteriorum mensurarentur spatia dextrorum saltibus non plus duodecim milibus.”
99. HR 6.
100. The most thorough of these is Robert Christophe’s three-part study, “Les limites primitives du territoire de l’Abbaye de Stavelot Malmédy, 1–3.”
101. HR 1 (ca. 644).
102. HR 82 (966), “ab una arbore que vulgo dicitur pekeruol usque.” On trees in

boundaries, see Della Hooke, *The Landscape of Anglo-Saxon England* (London: Leicester University Press, 1998), p. 21.

103. HR 83 (968); HR 67 (ca. 947); HR 65.

104. Rosenwein's boundary evidence is also a reminder of how scant Stavelot's is—247 of the 346 exchange documents for Cluny contain boundary clauses! Barbara Rosenwein, *To Be the Neighbor of Saint Peter: The Social Meaning of Cluny's Property, 909–1049* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989), pp. 75, 5, 82.

105. HR 65, 67, and 83 were all issued and produced at Stavelot.

106. HR 163 (1137).

107. Ibid.

108. HR 165 (1138).

109. The *silva bona* were HR 72 (953), HR 74 (953), HR 136 (1105). Two properties, Sigudis and Burcido/Barris, contained *silva optima*, according to HR 43 (891).

110. HR 74 (953).

111. HR 43 (891).

112. HR 46 (896), “id est terram arabilem et silvis bonuari v.”

113. HR 151 (1130–31).

114. HR 151, “silva de Rupe que est de banno regis.”

115. HR2, “partibus monasteriorum mensurarentur spatia dextrorum saltibus.”

116. HR 6.

117. HR 25, “de sua foreste duodecim leugas undique mensuratas sive qua infra erant” Emphasis mine.

118. Ibid., “ut sex leugas eis subraheret propter quietudinem monachorum ibidem consistentium, et sex eis per suum praeceptum confirmaret, atque undique designari juberet.”

119. This ratio appears regularly on Roman mile-markers in Gaul. G. Walser, “Meilen und Leugen,” *Epigraphia* 31 (1969): 84–103.

120. HR 70.

121. *Vita Remacli*, 20, “per utriusque monasterii circuitum duodecim leucae desingarentur, intra quorum limites quidquid haberetur.”

122. Ibid. “Dicitur autem leuca apud Gallos spatium mille quingentorum passum, id est, duodecim stadiorum.”

123. M. T. Clanchy traces a similar pattern for post-Conquest England in *From Memory to Written Record, England 1066–1307*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Press, 1993). See also Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), and Bernard Bischoff, *Manuscripts and Libraries in the Age of Charlemagne*, trans. and ed. Michael Gorman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). Specific discussion of the role of charters can be found in Karl Heidecker, ed., *Charters and the Use of the Written Word in Medieval Society* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2000).

124. James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 11.

125. Daniel Lord Smail, *Imaginary Cartographies: Possession and Identity in Late Medieval Marseille* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999), and Robert F. Berkhofer, *Day of Reckoning: Power and Accountability in Medieval France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

126. On the rhetoric and construction of cartularies and polyptychs, see Patrick Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994). For an overview of polyptychs, see Fossier, *Polyptyques et censiers*.

127. John Nightengale, *Monasteries and Patrons in the Gorze Reform: Lotharingia c. 850–1000* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), pp. 55–56. Rosenwein, *To Be the Neighbor of Saint Peter*, p. 115.

128. Helga Müller-Kehlen, *Die Ardennen im Frühmittelalter: Untersuchungen zum*

Königsgut in einem karolingischen Kernland (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973), p. 65.

129. Nightengale, *Monasteries and Patrons*, p. 55.

130. HR 69 (ca. 947) and HR 56 (2 October 926).

131. HR 80 (965).

132. HR 68 (947). Maurits Gysseling, *Toponymisch Woordenboek van België, Nederland, Luxemburg, Noord-Frankrijk en West-Duitsland (vóór 1226)*, digital edition, 2006–2008, <http://www.wulfila.be/tw/>, p. 496.

133. Heinz Zatschek, *Wibald von Stablo. Studien zur Geschichte der Reichskanzlei und Reichspolitik unter den älteren Staufern* (Innsbruck: Wagner, 1928), p. 240.

134. HR 98 (1030).

135. HR 148 (1128).

136. Peter Spufford, *Money and Its Use in Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), esp. chaps. 3 and 4.

137. HR 138 (1107), “que etiam plus minusve fuerit pro duobus computabantur manis x sol. Solventibus.”

138. HR 117 (1085).

139. HR 116 (1082).

140. HR 140 (1118).

141. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, p. 79.

142. Rosenwein, *To Be the Neighbor of Saint Peter*, p. 73.

143. Hans-Peter Wehl, *Reichsabtei und König: dargestellt am Beispiel der Abtei Lorsch mit Ausblicken auf Hersfeld, Stablo und Fulda* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1970), p. 224; Zatschek, “Wibald von Stablo,” p. 258.

144. HR 123.

145. HR 105, 124.

146. Rosenwein, *Rhinoceros Bound: Cluny in the Tenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), and *To Be the Neighbor of Saint Peter*.

147. *Passio Agilolfi*, 1.3.

148. *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, ed. Stephen A. Barney et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 299.

149. Ibid.

150. Richard Hennig, *Die Entwicklung des Naturgefühls: das Wesen der Inspiration* (Leipzig: Verlag von Johann Ambrosius Barth, 1912), p. 12.

151. Derek Pearsall and Elizabeth Salter, *Landscapes and Seasons in the Medieval World* (London: Elek, 1973). See also Dagmar Thoss, *Studien zum locus amoenus im Mittelalter* (Wien: Wilhem Braumüller, 1972).

152. John Howe, “Creating Symbolic Landscapes: Medieval Development of Sacred Space,” in *Inventing Medieval Landscapes: Senses of Place in Western Europe* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002), pp. 210–12.

153. Cited and translated by Howe, “Creating Symbolic Landscapes,” p. 211.

154. Ibid.

155. *Vita Popponis*, c.7, “situs loci iucunditate.”

156. Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmina* lib. III, XII, “Item de castello eiusdem super Mosella.”

157. *Translatio Quirini*, 2.15.

158. *Vita Remacii*, 13, “voluit stabulum fidelium animarum, eo tanquam ad aeternae vitae pascuae deinceps preperaturarum.”

159. *Vita Remacii Prima*, c. 2, “caelestis vitae pascua.”

160. Wibald, *Epistolae* 11, “vitae aeternae pascua.”

161. Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), p. 15.

162. *Miracula Remacii*, c. 1.6.

163. Giles Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), [chapter 4](#).

164. *Vita Remacii Prima*, c. 2, “quo tanta ac talis arbor germina protulisset.”
165. *Vita Popponis*, c.1, “ne semen verbi Dei in agro cordis vitiorum spinis suffocaretur, sed fructu centuplicato in patientia augmentaretur.” This passage alludes to, but does not directly quote, Matthew 4:18–20.
166. *Vita Popponis*, c. 7, “qui aeternae viriditatis fructum suis in actibus non dehabuit.”
167. *Ibid.*, “Ascendet foetor eius, qui magnificat opera sua.”
168. *Passio Agilolfi*, c. 1.4.
169. *Ibid.*, “Spargo vestris in cordibus divini verbi semina.... si ... nec spinae praefocaverint, nec aestus exusserit, accedente pluvia hortationum mearum et cogitationibus vestris bonis.... in agro rastris, et glebae frangantur, et semen operiatur, germinabitis et afferetis fructum iustitiae, ad quem gaudeat et laetetur agricola. Gaudete in Domino semper, iterum dico gaudete.”
170. Lynda Coon, “What Is the Word if Not Semen?” *Priestly Bodies in Carolingian Exegesis*, in *Gender in the Early Medieval World: East and West, 300–900*, ed. Julia M. H. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 278.
171. *Passio Agilolfi*, 1.7, “Nec simus infoecundae arbores, igni comberendae; sed simus in domo Domino plantatio fertilis et ornata floribus sine fine.”
172. *Vita Secunda Sancti Huberti*, 31. ‘sed super optimam terram jacto verbi semine’; ‘in eundem locum religiositatis cultores confluere.’
173. Wibald, *Epistolae* 2.
174. Wibald, *Epistolae* 458, “si in terram bonam ceciderit, in tantum crescit, ut volucres coeli tamquam in arbore nidificare possint.” Cf. Luke 13:19, “simile est grano sinapis quod acceptum homo misit in hortum suum et crevit et factum est in arborem magnam et volucres caeli requieverunt in ramis eius.”
175. Wibald, *Epistolae* 12 and 14.
176. Wibald, *Epistolae* 14. “Hactenus in agro dominicae culturae, id est in vestrae fraternitatis praelatione, arbor umbram et non fructum faciens terram occupavi.... Quoniam igitur secures ad radicem iam posita est, ut omnis arbor, quae fructum non faciat, succidatur.” This draws loosely on Luke 13:6–9 and more directly on Matthew 3:10, “iam enim securis ad radicem arborum posita est omnis ergo arbor quae non facit fructum bonum exciditur et in ignem mittitur.”
177. Wibald, *Epistolae* 463.
178. Notger’s prefatory letter to the *Vita Remacii*.
179. Wibald, *Epistolae* 11.
180. *Vita Remacii*, 12. See also chapter 6.
181. *Vita Hadalini*, 8.
182. William North, “The Fragmentation and Redemption of a Medieval Cathedral: Property, Conflict, and Public Piety in Eleventh-Century Arezzo,” in *Conflict in Medieval Europe: Changing Perspectives on Society and Culture*, ed. Warren C. Brown and Piotr Gorecki (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2003), p. 109.
183. Wibald, *Epistolae* 155.

CHAPTER 3. FIGHTING OVER FORESTS

1. See Karl Heidecker, ed., *Charters and the Use of the Written Word in Medieval Society* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2000), and the standard work on charters, Harry Bresslau, *Handbuch der Urkundenlehre für Deutschland und Italien*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Veit, 1889).
2. Halkin and Roland, eds., *Recueil des chartes*, xlv–xlvi.
3. There is a rich body of literature on conflict and conflict resolution in medieval Europe. For a representative sampling, see the collected essays in Warren C. Brown and Piotr Gorecki, eds., *Conflict in Medieval Europe: Changing Perspectives on Society and Culture* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2003), and Steven D. White’s collected essays, *Feuding and Peace-Making in Eleventh-Century France* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Variorum, 2005). For case

studies of monastic conflict, see Barbara Rosenwein, Thomas Head, and Sharon Farmer, "Monks and Their Enemies: A Comparative Approach," *Speculum* 66 (1991): 764–96.

4. Rosenwein, Head, and Farmer, "Monks and Their Enemies."

5. HR 1 (ca. 644).

6. Patrick Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994); Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

7. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, p. 84.

8. *Vita Remacii*, c. 11.

9. *Ibid.*

10. HR 2 (ca. 648). The signatories not named in this paragraph were the bishops Attelanus, Theudofridus, and Gislochardus, a second man named Bobo (of unknown rank), and the four *domestici*, Flodulfus, Ansigilius, Bettelinus, and Garibert.

11. HR 2.

12. HR 6 (670).

13. Christophe, "Les limites primitives du territoire de l'Abbaye de Stavelot Malmedy, 1."

14. Chris Wickham, "European Forests in the Early Middle Ages: Landscape and Land Clearance," in *L'ambiente vegetale nell'alto medioevo: 30 marzo–5 aprile 1989*, Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 37, 2 (Spoleto: Presso la Sede del Centro, 1990), pp. 513–14.

15. Barbara Rosenwein, "Visualizing a Dispute Resolution: Peter of Albano's Protected Zone," in *Conflict in Medieval Europe: Changing Perspectives on Society and Culture*, ed. Warren C. Brown and Piotr Gorecki (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2003), p. 98.

16. HR 25 (814). Emphasis mine.

17. HR 2, also MGH DD Mer. 1 no. 81, p. 207.

18. HR 2, HR 6.

19. HR 25.

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*

22. Barbara Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space: Power, Restraint, and Privileges of Immunity in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999), p. 7.

23. *Vita Hadalini*, c. 7.

24. *Ibid.*

25. HR 29.

26. HR 25.

27. HR 20 (6 January 755).

28. Lester K. Little, *Benedictine Maledictions: Liturgical Cursing in Romanesque France* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 13.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

30. HR 176 (ca. 1140). The Longia charter is HR 165 (5 June 1138).

31. HR 3 and HR 8 (663–74?).

32. HR 135 (1104), "ab sancto injuste abstulerant, invaserant, possederant, et mihi eadem possessione hereditariam reliquerant."

33. HR 135.

34. *Ibid.*, "excommunicatione territus."

35. Little, *Benedictine Maledictions*; Rosenwein, Head, and Farmer, "Monks and Their Enemies," p. 772; and Rosenwein, *To Be the Neighbor of St. Peter*.

36. HR 135.

37. Wibold, *Epistolae* 163.

38. HR 66.

39. HR 77.

40. HR 97 (1030).
41. HR 107 (1046).
42. HR 109.
43. HR 140 (1118).
44. HR 74.
45. Gurevich, *Categories of Medieval Culture*, trans. G. L. Campbell (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), p. 78.
46. *Miracula Remacii*, 1.8. No locations are mentioned in this section of the *Miracula*.
47. *Miracula Remacii* 1.8.
48. Thomas Head, "The Judgement of God: Andrew of Fleury's Account of the Peace League of Bourges," in *The Peace of God; Social Violence and Religious Response in France Around the Year 1000*, ed. Thomas Head and Richard Landes (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 219.
49. HR 29, "de qua hujus contentiois intentio agebatur."
50. The *silva* in Astanetum was located on the banks of the Amblève, between its two small tributaries, the Targnon (*Tailernion*) and the Roannay (*Dulnosus*). Halkin and Roland, eds., *Recueil des chartes*, p.74, n.1; Wickham, "European Forests," p. 512.
51. HR 25 (814). This charter was reissued, almost word-for-word, by Otto I when he came to the throne in February 950. HR 70.
52. HR 29 (827), "per priscorum regum Franchorum donationis precepta necnon et familia memorati fisci nostri ac actores ejusdem propter antiquam consuetudinem suas opportunitates et commoditates in eadem silva communiter habere debeant."
53. Many scholars emphasize the importance of negotiation, esp. Warren Brown, *Unjust Seizure: Conflict, Interest, and Authority in an Early Medieval Society* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001); White, *Feuding and Peacemaking*; and Wickham, "European Forests."
54. HR 99 (from 1033) appears to be the original imperial confirmation of the exchange established by the two abbots. The document was prepared in August 1033, at an imperial court. The royal confirmation has several lacunae, and thus the later document, HR 122 (from 1089), which was most likely a summary of a now-lost version of the royal charter, is the source of this discussion.
55. HR 144 (1126), "pravum et omnino dampnosum usum."
56. HR 157 (1133).
57. Wibald, *Epistolae* 131.
58. Wibald, *Epistolae* 99, "Annonam fratrum a villicis nostris aut vix aut nullo modo extorquere iam possumus." The second letter is Wibald, *Epistolae* 100.
59. Wibald, *Epistolae* 98.
60. HR 165. In addition to the stresses of managing a double monastery, Wibald and Poppo were both at times faced with oversight of a third house.
61. HR 165, "impediente malitia temporis.... occupati et fatigati."
62. Wibald, *Epistolae* 50–51.
63. Wibald, *Epistolae* 159, "fluctus animae nostrae, quibus cottidie turbamur et movemur sicut ebrius."
64. Wibald, *Epistolae* 159. Jaffé points out the equation of the women with the monasteries in his notes.
65. Wibald, *Epistolae* 311.
66. Ibid.
67. Otto of Friesing, *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*, ed. and trans. Charles Christopher Mierow (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), pp. 63–64.
68. Wibald, *Epistolae* 101.
69. Wibald, *Epistolae* 51. Turnines also appears in HR 84 (975).
70. Wibald, *Epistolae* 53.
71. Wibald, *Epistolae* 52.
72. Wibald, *Epistolae* 58.

73. Wibald, *Epistolae* 300.
74. Wibald, *Epistolae* 299.
75. Okereyes is the modern Ocquier, located near Liège. It also appears in a charter in which the men collectively organized and refused to pay taxes. HR 142 (1123).
76. Elisabeth Magnou-Notier, "The Enemies of the Peace: Reflections on a Vocabulary, 500–1100," in *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response in France Around the Year 1000*, ed. Thomas Head and Richard Landes, p. 71.
77. Wibald, *Epistolae* 302.
78. Wibald, *Epistolae* 301.
79. Wibald, *Epistolae* 334.
80. Janet L. Nelson, "The Last Years of Louis the Pious," in *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious*, ed. Roger Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 154. Stuart Airlie, "Bonds of Power and Bonds of Association in the Court of Louis the Pious," in *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious*, ed. Roger Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 192–93.
81. *Miracula Huberti II*, c. 15. Note the use of two different forest terms, *silva* and *saltus*.
82. Dominic Alexander, *Saints and Animals in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2008), p. 39.
83. *Passio Agilolfi*, 2.
84. *Vita Remacii*, c. 10.
85. *Ibid.*, c. 1.
86. Hans Hummer, "Reform and Lordship in Alsace at the Turn of the Millennium," in *Conflict in Medieval Europe: Changing Perspectives on Society and Culture*, ed. Warren Brown and Piotr Górecki (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 76–77.
87. Albert D'Haenens, *Les Invasions normandes en Belgique au IX^e siècle; le phénomène et sa répercussion dans l'historiographie médiévale*, Recueil de travaux d'histoire et de philologie vol. 4, 38 (Louvain: Publications Universitaires de Louvain, 1967), p. 16.
88. Richard Barber, trans., *Bestiary* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 1992), pp. 76–77.
89. Jean Birrell, "Peasant Deer Poachers in the Medieval Forest," in *Progress and Problems in Medieval England: Essays in Honour of Edward Miller*, ed. Richard Hugh Britnell and John Hatcher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 78.
90. Wibald, *Epistolae* 126.
91. *Ibid.*, 118, "canes muti non valentes latrare"; this is an abbreviated reference to Isaiah 56: 9–11: "omnes bestiae agri venite ad devorandum universae bestiae saltus / speculatores eius caeci omnes nescierunt universi canes muti non valentes latrare videntes vana dormientes et amantes somnia / et canes inpuidentissimi nescierunt saturitatem."
92. *Miraculi Sancti Huberti*, book 2. 8.
93. *Ibid.*
94. *Vita Popponis*, c. 1.
95. *Ibid.*, c. 2.
96. *Ibid.*, c. 12.
97. *Ibid.*, "Ursis etiam nudus quidam vir membra melle perunctus exhibetur, a quo etiam plurimum pro periculo suimet timetur, ne forte ab eisdem ursis ad ossa sui melle consumpto perveniretur. Proinde rex eiusdem spectaculi adeo amore in oculis suis captus tenetur, atque male providus pro periculo viri parum veretur."
98. *Ibid.*
99. Schäfer discusses this incident briefly in the context of Poppo's religious career. Dorothee Schäfer, "Studien zu Poppo von Stablo und den Klosterreformen im 11. Jahrhundert," Ph.D. diss., University of Munich, 1991, pp. 15–16.
100. See [Chapter 1](#).
101. *Vita Popponis*, c. 6.
102. *Ibid.*, "Quid igitur? Laxantur ergo retia in captura, non minus piscium retibus Petri habitura; nam tantam piscium multitudinem mox collegerunt, quantam ante capturam

nullatenus futuram speraverunt.”

103. Ibid.

104. On the property value of animals and the symbolic and economic importance of that value, see Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 1994), [chapter 1](#).

105. *Miracula Remacii*, 1.9.

106. *Miracula Remacii*, 2.20. This miracle highlights the structural and authorial variations that exist in the *Miracula Remacii*, which were composed over many years by multiple authors. This story is stylized in a very unusual way, as it purports to be a relatively direct report from the peasant himself.

107. Ibid., “Placetne tibi, sanctissime Confessor, quia furati sunt michi boves, quos de labore meo ad servitium tuum acquisivi? Scito, quia ab hodierna die non capies denarium meum, nisi restitueris quod perditum est.”

108. See Patrick J. Geary, “Humiliation of the Saints,” in *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp. 95–116.

109. Wibald, *Epistolae* 384, 389. This is also used as an example by Little, *Benedictine Maledictions*, p. 147.

110. Wibald, *Epistolae* 329.

111. See [Chapter 5](#).

112. The *Miracula Remacii* is heavily laden with retributive miracles. Even some of the healing miracles are violent and physical. It should be noted that the MGH version eliminates most of this first miracle, without any explanation for the editorial decision, despite its prominence in the text. The importance of the first miracle in a collection or book is addressed by Ashley and Sheingorn, *Writing Faith*, p. 74.

113. “solus positus cum suo equo in campo vicini sui ... ejusque herbam injuste depasceret.” *Miracula Remacii*, 1.1.

114. *Miracula Remacii*, 1.4.

115. *Miracula Remacii*, 1.1.

116. Hans-Werner Goetz, “Protection of the Church, Defense of the Law, and Reform,” in *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response in France Around the Year 1000*, ed. Thomas Head and Richard Landes (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp. 267–70; Geoffrey Koziol, “Monks, Feuds, and the Making of Peace in Eleventh-Century Flanders,” in *The Peace of God*, ed. Head and Landes, pp. 239–58.

117. Wibald, *Epistolae* 419 and 420.

118. Wibald, *Epistolae* 419.

119. Wibald, *Epistolae* 149.

120. Wibald, *Epistolae* 165. On avoiding extreme trials, see Stephen D. White, “Proposing the Ordeal and Avoiding It: Strategy and Power in Western French Litigation,” in *Feuding and Peace-Making in Eleventh-Century France* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Variorum, 2005), section vii.

121. Wibald, *Epistolae* 174.

122. Wibald, *Epistolae* 109.

CHAPTER 4. CREATING CONFLICT

1. Patrick J. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 114.

2. Ibid.

3. HR 150 (1130–31), 151 (1130–31), HR 154 (ca. 1131). Stavelot’s control of the property was confirmed in a papal bull of 1140 (HR 171).

4. HR 276 (1188).

5. *Miracula Remacii*, 2.15.

6. Ibid. “competentia cum ferramentis suis praeparavit.”

7. The three Minor Rogations, the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Ascension Day (forty days after Easter), were first ordered in the late fifth century by St. Mamertus of Vienne, and were formalized in 511 by the Fifth Council of Orleans. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. Rogation Days.

8. *Miracula Remacii*, 2.15. “Nam verbi gratia lupi atque ursi acerbi per portas Viennae urbis violenter irrupentes, plurimos devoraverunt per annum integrum.”

9. *Sancti Adonis Elogium Historicum*, ed. Migne, *PL* 123, col. 102.

10. Sidonius Apollinaris, “Sidonius Apro Suo Salutem” *MGH AA* 8, Bruno Krusch, ed., pp. 87–88.

11. Ado, *Elogium Historicum*, col. 102.

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*

14. One passage in the *Miracula Remacii* might show that the author of the *Miracula* read Ado. Ado’s account of the forest animals reads in part, “lupi, ursi, ac cervi.” The *Miracula Remacii*, however, reads “lupi atque ursi acerbi.” Ado’s phrase “ac cervi” might have been misread by the author of the *Miracula Remacii* or one of its subsequent copyists and included in this passage as “acerbi.”

15. Peregrine Horden, “Disease, Dragons, and Saints: The Management of Epidemics in the Dark Ages,” in *Epidemics and Ideas: Essays on the Historical Perception of Pestilence*, ed. Terence Ranger and Paul Slack (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 50.

16. Hans-Peter Wehlt, *Reichsabtei und König: dargestellt am Beispiel der Abtei Lorsch mit Ausblicken auf Hersfeld, Stablo und Fulda* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1970), p. 217.

17. The houses’ earliest episcopal charters are from this period: between 980 and 1108, there are four surviving charters from the archbishop of Liège (HR 79, 85, 87, 89) and four from the archbishop of Cologne (HR 74, 75, 77, 94).

18. Wehlt, *Reichsabtei und König*, p. 217. Henry IV’s confirmation of the Synod of Ingelheim decree is HR 113.

19. This passage, by Frederick, a later archbishop of Cologne, was cited by D. W. Wattenbach in his preface to the *Triumphus sancti Remacii de Malmundariensi coenobio* *MGH SS* vol. 11, 434.

20. *Triumphus Remacii*, c. 2.38.

21. Halkin and Roland, p. xxx.

22. “Malmédy n’offre à l’historiographie qu’un contingent d’oeuvres peu nombreuses et médiocres.” Sylvain Balau, *Les sources de l’histoire du pays de Liège au Moyen Age: Étude critique* (Brussels: L’Académie Royale des Sciences, des Lettres et des Beaux-arts de Belgique, 1903), p. 225.

23. *Passio Agilolfi*, “Commentarius Praevius,” 2, 716. Of course, it is always possible that these were, in fact, two different men.

24. The addressees of Pope Zachary’s letter include Agilolf, “episcopi Coloniensis.” AASS, “Commentarius Praevius” to the *Passio*, 2, p. 716.

25. Halkin and Roland, eds., *Recueil des chartes*, pp. xxix–xxx. *Series Abbatum Stabulensium*, *MGH SS* 13, pp. 292–94.

26. *Ibid.*, xxx. *Passio Agilolfi*, “Commentarius Praevius,” 1, 714–15. The liturgical celebrations contain two different feast days, 31 March and 9 July.

27. *Liber Historiae Francorum* [hereafter *LHF*]. For a translation see Bernard Bachrach, ed. and trans., *Liber Historiae Francorum* (Lawrence, Kan.: Coronado Press, 1973); *Annales Mettenses Priores*; Fredegar Continuator.

28. Bernard Bachrach, *Early Carolingian Warfare: Prelude to Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), pp. 19–20. For more political context, see Paul Fouracre’s *The Age of Charles Martel* (Harlow, UK: Longman, 2000).

29. *LHF*, 52.

30. Bachrach, *Early Carolingian Warfare*, p. 20. Bachrach’s chronology for the events

leading up to the battle of the Ambève is based on both the *Fredegar Continuator* and the *LHF*. See also Richard A. Gerberding, *The Rise of the Carolingians and the Liber Historiae Francorum* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 130–32, which focuses on the possible participants in the battle.

31. Bachrach, *Early Carolingian Warfare*, pp. 20–21. Charles's final defeat of Ragamfred and Chilperic took place in March 717 at Vinchy.

32. *Fredegar Continuator*, 9.

33. *LHF*, 52.

34. Here this account is at variance with the others, neither of which mentions any sort of permanent encampment.

35. *Annales Mettenses Priores*, 21.

36. For example, when he describes Charles's assembling of the troops, the author claims this took place at a site that by the eleventh century the locals still called *Ad Caterva*, reflecting the memory of the presence of troops or of the battle. *Passio Agilolfi*, 2.

37. *Passio Agilolfi*, 1.3. "Non aliter, varii quam turbant aëra venti, irrumpunt ovilia sacra lupi; multi corrunt in ore gladii. Haud secus agnorum quam turmam turba luporum dissipat, et praedam praedo rapit ore cruento." Note the wordplay with *os* and *praeda*—armed men and military terminology are converted to bestial language. This is continued in the next sentence, where their behavior is described as cruel (*crudeliter*).

38. *Passio Agilolfi*, 1.3–4.

39. Book 1 of the *Passio* further describes Charles as wielding the scepter of power ("*regalia sceptrum jure tenentem*").

40. Remensnyder, *Remembering Kings Past*.

41. *Passio Agilolfi*, 2.

42. The only other account to suggest a lengthy encampment in the Ardennes is the Metz annalist, whose account refers to a *castrum* where Ragamfred and Childeric were based.

43. *Passio Agilolfi*, 1.5.

44. *Ibid.*, 1.8.

45. *Ibid.* This passage was only found in one of the manuscripts. "Verum tempus erat, gelidus canis cum montibus humor liquitur, et Zephyro putris se gleba resolvit: frondebant silvae, ridebant floribus herbae, Martius die claudebatur ultima, ferebat Aprilim dies crastina." The first part of this sentence, "gelidus ... resolvit," is a citation of Vergil, *Georgics*, book 1, line 43.

46. *Ibid.*

47. *Ibid.*

48. There is no village near Malmedy that has such a name; instead, this appears to be a classicism adopted by the author to help set the tone of authority for the *mater familias*.

49. *Ibid.*, "Papae! aiunt, fugiamus, silva nos persequente. Ecce nos obruunt nemora, celeriter ad nos venientia." Note the use of two distinct woodland terms.

50. Some of these are discussed in N. W. Hill, "The Wood of Birnam," *Modern Language Notes* 24, no. 8 (1909): 229–30. See also Roland Bechmann, *Trees and Man: The Forest in the Middle Ages*, trans. Katharyn Durham (New York: Paragon House, 1990), p. 92.

51. The attack on Fredegund by the Austrasians and Burgundians, and the turmoil leading up to that challenge, are discussed by Roger Collins, *Early Medieval Europe 300–1000* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), pp. 156–57.

52. *LHF*, 36. "De nocte consurgamus contra eos cum lucernis, portantes socii, qui nos precedunt, ramis silvarum in manibus, tintinnabulis super equos legatis, ut nos cognoscere ipsorum vigiles custodes hostium non queant. Inluciscente initium diei, inruamus super eos, et forsitan eos devincimus." This passage was discussed by Pauline Taylor, who viewed it as a potential inspiration for Shakespeare's account of Birnam Wood. "Birnam Wood: 700 A.D.–1600 A.D.," *Modern Language Notes* 39, no. 4 (1924): 244–47. Rosamond McKitterick also sees this as a precursor to Birnam Wood in *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 11.

53. LHF, 36.

54. Ibid. "Cum autem custodes hostium Austrasiorum ramis silvarum quasi in montibus in agmine Francorum cernerenti."

55. Ibid. "Nonne crastina die in illo et illo loco campestria erant, quomodo silvas cernimus?" et ille inridens, dixit: 'Certe inebriatus fuisti, modo deleras. Non audis tintinnabula equorum nostrorum iuxta ipsam silvam pascensium?'"

56. Aimo of Fleury, *Historiae francorum libri quatuor*, PL 139.627-798.

57. Aimo of Fleury, 3.82, col. 751-53. "Intempesta nocte surgens exercitus, silvam Landerico ducente est ingressus. Qui, arrepta securi, ramum praecidit arboris, suspensumque tintinnabulum collo equi cui insidebat ferens, hortatur socios ut suum omnes sequantur exemplum. Qui certatim arborum praecisis ramis, arreptisque una tintinnabulis, factum mitati ducis, matutinin hostilibus astitere castris."

58. Ibid., 3.82, col. 753. "Sed unus hostium, qui cum sociis praetendebat munia vigiliarum, clara necdum luce eos conspiciens adventare, et rem prorsus ignorans, conversus ad socium: 'Quaenam est, ait, haec quem contemplor silva, cum hesterno vespere hic nulla apparent vel minima virgulta?'"

59. Ibid., "Cui socius: 'Tu, inquit, pridianas adhuc ructans epulas, vinoque solutus, oblivione mandasti proximi saltus opportuna nos equis nostris invenisse pascua. Nunquid non audis tintinnabula pascentium equorum collis deperdentia?'"

60. *Passio Agilolfi*, 2. "Clamant iterum speculatores, audire se fragorem silvae venientis.... Tandem impetus venientium omnium pulsant aures, territique tyranni cum satellibus procedunt inermes."

61. Sylvain Balau also proposed that the *Passio* was written subsequent to the translation of Agilolf's relics. Balau, *Les sources de l'histoire*, p. 226. Baix, "L'Hagiographie à Stavelot-Malmédy," *Revue Benedictine* 60 (1950): 154, 160-61. Wilhelm Levison, "Bischof Agilolf von Köln und seine Passio," in *Aus Rheinischer und Fränkischer Frühzeit: ausgewählte Aufsätze von Wilhelm Levison* (Düsseldorf: Verlag L. Schwann, 1948), pp. 76-95.

62. Levison adroitly shows the connections between the *Passio* and the *Translatio Quirini*, including shared miracles, similar descriptions of the site of Agilolf's death, and other "textual tags." Levison, "Bischof Agilolf von Köln," pp. 89-90.

63. This is described by Lampert of Hersfeld in his *Annals*. Jonathan Rotundo-McCord, "Body-Snatching and Episcopal Power; Archbishop Anno II of Cologne (1056-1075), Burials at St. Mary's *ad gradus*, and the Minority of King Henry IV," *Journal of Medieval History* 22, no. 4 (1996): 297-98.

64. *Triumphus Remacii*, 1.2.

65. Ibid., "magnae industriae acrisque ingenii."

66. Ibid.

67. Thomas Vogtherr, *Der König und der Heilige: Heinrich IV., der heilige Remaklus und die Mönche des Doppelklosters Stablo-Malmédy*, Schriften des Historischen Kollegs vol. 25, (Munich: Stiftung Historischen Kolleg, 1990), pp. 43-44.

68. A few days earlier at this same assembly, all of Stavelot's privileges had been reconfirmed by Henry. HR 113 (1065).

69. Rudolf Schieffer, "Anno von Köln," in *Lexicon des Mittelalters* (Munich: Artemis Verlag, 1991), p. 666. Alfred Haverkamp, *Aufbruch und Gestaltung Deutschland 1056-1273* (Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1984), p. 101; Vogtherr, *Der König und der Heilige*, p. 46; Wehl, *Reichsabtei und König*, pp. 216-17.

70. Schieffer, "Anno," p. 667.

71. Levison argued for the specific date because the relics appear in documents relating to the 1 August 1062 royal assembly at Cologne. The feast day of Agilolf was set in Cologne Calendar (twelfth century) as 9 July. Levison, "Agilolf von Köln," p. 79. There is disagreement in the secondary literature, as Halkin and Roland put the translation in the year 1065. Halkin and Roland, eds., *Recueil des chartes*, p. xxx.

72. Levison, "Bischof Agilolf von Köln," pp. 80, 90.

73. *Translatio Quirini*, c. 38.
74. Ibid., “apud Amblavam coronatus est martyrio, atque apud nos, ubi abbatis nomine praefuerat et opere, usque dum Deus voluit, locum habuit sepulturae.” Emphasis mine.
75. Anonymous author, *Vita Annoni*, 37. IV Dec. in AASS.
76. On medieval discussions of the legitimacy of relic transfers, and on claims that if a relic were successfully stolen the outcome justified the means, see Geary, “Justifications,” in *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 108–28.
77. Geary, *Furta Sacra*, p. 115 and 152.
78. Rotundo-McCord, “Body-Snatching and Episcopal Power,” p. 299.
79. Ibid., pp. 306–10.
80. Ibid., p. 304.
81. *Passio Agilolfi*, 1.6.
82. Ibid., 1.10.
83. Levison, “Bischof Agilolf von Köln,” p. 90.
84. *Passio Agilolfi*, 2.
85. Ibid.
86. Levison was reluctant to confirm fully that the works were by the same author.
87. *Passio Agilolfi*, 1.10, “Heu, viduata tanto pastore Colonia, cujus sanguine rubet tellus Arduinna.”
88. Levison, “Bischof Agilolf von Köln,” p. 90.
89. Ibid., p. 92.
90. Jacques Stiennon and Joseph Deckers, eds., *Exposition Wibald, abbé de Stavelot-Malmédy et de Corvey (1130–1158): catalogue*, 2 July–26 September 1982 (Stavelot: Musée de l’ancienne Abbaye, 1982), pp. 225–44. Stiennon’s article includes a summary of the *Passio* and a review of other twentieth-century historians and critics who wrote on the piece.
91. Ibid., p. 239.

CHAPTER 5. THE RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE AND MONASTIC IDENTITY

1. Frederic W. Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond: Three Essays in the Early History of England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1897), and W. G. Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1955).
2. Della Hooke, *The Landscape of Anglo-Saxon England* (London: Leicester University Press, 1998).
3. Oliver Rackham, *Ancient Woodland: Its History, Vegetation, and Uses in England* (London: E. Arnold, 1980); Tom Williamson, *Shaping Medieval Landscapes: Settlement, Society, Environment* (Macclesfield, Cheshire: Windgather Press, 2003).
4. Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), p. 7.
5. Paul Groth, “Frameworks for Cultural Landscape Study,” in *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*, ed. Groth and Todd W. Bress (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 1.
6. Barbara Rosenwein, *To Be the Neighbor of St. Peter: The Social Meaning of Cluny’s Property, 909–1049* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989).
7. Trans. and cited in Thomas Head, ed., *Medieval Hagiography: An Anthology* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 273.
8. Peter the Venerable, translated by Barbara Rosenwein, *Reading the Middle Ages* (Peterborough, Calif.: Broadview Press, 2006), p. 332.
9. Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 11.
10. Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Press, 2000), p. 406.
11. Raymond Van Dam, *Saints and Their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul* (Princeton, N.J.:

Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 139.

12. Ibid., p. 119.

13. Karine Ugé, *Creating the Monastic Past in Medieval Flanders* (York: York Medieval Press, 2005), p. 95.

14. Ugé, *Creating the Monastic Past*, p. 10.

15. Sharon A. Farmer, *Communities of Saint Martin: Legend and Ritual in Medieval Tours* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991).

16. Barbara H. Rosenwein, "The Places and Spaces of Emotion," in *Uomo e Spazio nell'alto medioevo, Settimane di studio del Centro Italiano di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi Sull'alto Medioevo*, 50 (Spoleto: Presso la Sede del Centro, 2003): 505–32, translation on p. 507.

17. Ibid., p. 525; for another "circle" of religious authority, see Rosenwein's article on immunity and negotiation, "Visualizing a Dispute Resolution: Peter of Albano's Protected Zone," in *Conflict in Medieval Europe: Changing Perspectives on Society and Culture*, ed. Warren C. Brown and Piotr Gorecki (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 85–107.

18. Laurent Verslype, "Au temps de saint Remacle: Un aperçu de l'Ardenne mérovingienne," in *Saint Remacle l'apôtre de l'Ardenne*, ed. Albert LeMeunier (Spa: ASBL fête de Saint-Remacle, 1995), pp. 31–32; Alain Dierkins, "De la christianisation de l'Ardenne à l'époque mérovingienne," in *ibid.*, pp. 42–43.

19. Müller-Kehlen, *Die Ardennen im Frühmittelalter*, pp. 29–31, 39. Édouard DeMoreau, S. J., *Les Abbayes de Belgique (VIIe–XIIe siècles)* (Brussels: La Renaissance du livre, 1952), pp. 7–9, 15–18; Hubert Collin, "Essai d'une carte monastique des Ardennes sous l'Ancien Régime," *Études Ardennaises* 52 (1968): 3–8.

20. *Vita Remacii*, c. 12.

21. Ibid., c. 1.

22. Ibid., preface.

23. Ibid., c. 1.

24. Ibid., c. 12, "invenii illic certa indicia loca illa quondam idololatriae [sic] fuisse mancipata"; "erant illic lapides Dianae"; "et id genus portentosis nominibus inscripti, vel effigies eorum habentes."

25. Ibid. John Howe, "Creating Symbolic Landscapes: Medieval Development of Sacred Space," in *Inventing Medieval Landscapes: Senses of Place in Western Europe* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002), p. 211.

26. *Vita Remacii*, c. 12, emphasis mine.

27. Ibid., c. 5, "perpetuae quietis locum ... humanis usibus opportunum."

28. *Miracula Remacii*, 1.3.

29. Ibid., 2.17; 2.9. Portions of the following discussion of Remacle's fountain are drawn from my article, "Engineering Miracles: Water Control, Conversion, and the Creation of a Religious Landscape in the Medieval Ardennes," *Environment and History* 13.4 (November 2007): 477–502.

30. The retable was destroyed during the early modern era (the last reference to it is before the 1701 fire that destroyed the roof of Stavelot's church), but a large, 1661 copy of an earlier drawing of the piece is still housed in Liège. For a discussion of the copy and a lengthy discussion of the entire program of the retable, see Susanne Wittekind, *Altar—Reliquiar—Retabel: Kunst und Liturgie bei Wibald von Stablo* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2004), pp. 235, 46. See also Peter Lasko, *Ars Sacra: 800–1200*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 193–94.

31. Joseph Bastin. *Wibald, Abbé de Stavelot et Malmedy du Mont-Cassin et de Corbie; Biographie publiée à l'occasion du 8e centenaire de son élévation à la dignité d'abbé de Stavelot* (Verviers: G. Leens, 1931), pp. 285–86.

32. Ibid., p. 290.

33. Ibid., p. 289 and illustration 111. See also HR 75 (953?).

34. Wittekind, *Altar—Reliquiar—Retabel*, p. 297.

35. Ibid., p. 292.

36. Ibid., p. 293.
37. See [Chapter 3](#).
38. Schama, "The Verdant Cross," in *Landscape and Memory*, pp. 214–26 at 219.
39. Della Hooke, *Trees in Anglo-Saxon England: Literature, Lore and Landscape* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell and Brewer, 2010), p. 28.
40. Amy G. Remensnyder, *Remembering Kings Past: Monastic Foundation Legends in Medieval Southern France* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995).
41. Pierre Koumouh, "Des arbres sacrés pains à l'Arbre-de-Vie chrétien dans le retable de saint Remacle à Stavelot," *Folklore: Stavelot-Malmédy* 54 (1993): 42–67.
42. Wittekind, *Altar–Reliquiar–Retabel*, p. 295.
43. HR 150–52; Fossier, *Polyptyques et censiers* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1978).
44. Joseph Bastin, *Wibald, Abbé de Stavelot et Malmédy du Mont-Cassin et de Corbie; biographie publiée à l'Occasion du 8e centenaire de son élévation à la dignité d'abbé de Stavelot* (Verviers: G. Leens, 1931), p. 21.
45. Sam Turner, *Making a Christian Landscape: The Countryside in Early Medieval Cornwall, Devon and Wessex* (Devon, UK: University of Exeter Press, 2006), p. 3.
46. C. A. Lees and G. R. Overing, *A Place to Believe in: Locating Medieval Landscapes* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).
47. Roberta Gilchrist, *Norwich Cathedral Close: The Evolution of the English Cathedral Landscape* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2005).
48. G. R. Overing, "Anglo-Saxon Horizons: Places of the Mind in the Northumbrian Landscape," in Lees and Overing, *A Place to Believe In*, p. 15.
49. Remensnyder, *Remembering Kings Past*.
50. Brown, *The Cult of Saints*, p. 124.
51. *Vita Remacii*, c. 4.
52. Baix, "L'Hagiographie à Stavelot-Malmédy," *Revue Benedictine* 60 (1950): 151; Benoît van den Bossche, ed., *Patrimoine religieux du pays de Lièrneux: 692–1992 XIIIe centenaire de la fondation de l'église de Lièrneux* (Lièrneux: Abbaye de Stavelot, 1992), pp. 23, 25.
53. Baix, "L'Hagiographie à Stavelot-Malmédy," p. 152.
54. HR 103. William LeGrand, "Notes sur l'église abbatiale de Stavelot," *Revue des archéologues et historiens d'art de Louvain* 3 (1970): 14–15; LeGrand, "L'Eglise abbatiale de Stavelot," *Bulletin de la Société d'Art et d'Histoire du Diocèse de Liège* 43 (1963): 183–226; Jacqueline Bureau, "Les Fouilles de l'ancienne église abbatiale de Stavelot: rapport des saisons 1983–1984," *Bulletin de la Société d'Art et d'Histoire du Diocèse de Liège* 11, no. 232–33 (1986): 117–36.
55. See Wolfgang Giese, "Zur Bautätigkeit von Bischöfen und Abten des 10. bis 12. Jahrhunderts," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittel-Alters* 38 (1982): 388–438; Barbara Abou-el-Haj, "The Audiences for Medieval Cult of Saints," *Gesta* 30, no. 1 (1991): 3–15; Thomas Head and Richard Landes, *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response in France Around the Year 1000* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992).
56. HR 161.
57. HR 180 (1145). Peter the Deacon, *Liber de Locis Sanctis*, PL 117, col. 1115–33, esp. 1119–20.
58. *Miracula Remacii*, 1.7; 2.9.
59. *Passio Agilolfi* 2.
60. On the origins of the treatment of hagiography as a separate genre, and on early attempts to find the factual basis for saints' lives, see Felice Lifshitz, "Beyond Positivism and Genre: Hagiographical Texts as Historical Narrative," *Viator* 25 (1994): 95–113. For clear and succinct evaluations of earlier work, see Thomas Head's "An Introductory Guide to Research in Medieval Hagiography," and "A Brief Guide to Scholarship on Western Hagiography," both available online at <http://www.the-orb.net/encyclop/religion/hagiography/guide1.htm> and <http://www.the-orb.net/encyclop/religion/hagiography/guide2.htm>.

61. Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 10.

62. Rachel Koopmans, *Wonderful to Relate: Miracle Stories and Miracle Collecting in High Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), p. 45.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

64. Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn, *Writing Faith: Text, Sign, and History in the Miracles of Sainte Foy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 11, 6.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

67. Holder-Egger admitted in his prefatory remarks to having excerpted portions of the *miracula* that he found to be “excessively long or wordy,” but offered no further explanation for his decisions. Introduction, *Miracula Remacli*, p. 432. The opening chapters to the *Miracula* are all found in the AASS edition.

68. *Miracula Remacli*, 1.1.

69. *Ibid.*, 1.2.

70. Brown, *Cult of the Saints*, p. 76.

71. *Miracula Remacli*, 1.12.

72. *Ibid.*

73. *Ibid.*, 1.13.

74. *Ibid.*, 2.12.

75. *Ibid.*, 1.5.

76. *Ibid.*, 2.6.

77. *Ibid.*, 2.2.

78. This *topos* of plague mortality was already well in place by the time the *Miracula* were written. Lester K. Little, “Life and Afterlife of the First Plague Pandemic,” in *Plague and the End of Antiquity: the Pandemic of 541–70*, ed. Little (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 7–15.

79. Donald Bullough, “Charlemagne’s ‘Men of God’ Alcuin, Hildebald, and Arn,” in *Charlemagne: Empire and Society*, ed. Joanna Story (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 142.

80. *Translatio Quirini*, 1.9

81. *Ibid.*, 2. 14.

82. *Miracula Remacli*, 2.4.

83. *Translatio Quirini*, 2.15.

84. *Ibid.*, 2. 16.

85. *Ibid.*, “ut tamquam mons immobilis penitus moveri non posset.”

86. *Ibid.*

87. *Ibid.*, 2.18.

88. *Ibid.*, “tenebrisque remotis implevit vacuas ignoto sole fenestras.”

89. *Ibid.*, “est enim non solum dulcis ad potandum, verum etiam sanitates conferens pro fide postulantium.”

90. *Ibid.*, 2.26.

91. *Ibid.*, 3.27.

92. *Ibid.*

93. *Ibid.*, “viriditatem sui perpetuo conservat gramine, ut nec aestivo exuratur fervore nec hiemali adimatur frigore.”

94. *Vita Remacli*, c. 5, *Passio Agilolfi* 2.

95. “sed per beatum Remaclum in curia regis miraculis inestimabilibus coruscantem,” as cited by D. W. Wattenbach in his preface to the *Triumphus sancti Remacli de Malmundariensi coenobio*, MGH SS vol. 11, p. 434.

96. *Triumphus Remacli*, 1.4. “per legatos suos illum invasisse, vendicasse Malmundarium.”

97. *Ibid.*, 1.5.

98. *Ibid.*, 2.1.

99. See Thomas Head, "The Judgment of God: Andrew of Fleury's Account of the Peace League of Bourges," in *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response in France Around the Year 1000*, ed. Thomas Head and Richard Landes (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp. 219–38; Bernhard Töpher, "The Cult of Relics and Pilgrimage in Burgundy and Aquitaine at the Time of the Monastic Reform," in *The Peace of God*, ed. Head and Landes, pp. 41–57.

100. *Triumphus Remacii*, 2.1.

101. Louvegne first appears in Stavelot's administrative record in a charter of 1095 (HR 129).

102. *Ibid.*, 2.2.

103. *Ibid.*, 2.7.

104. *Ibid.*, 2.11. On the role of scars as proof of miracle, see Sharon Farmer, "The Beggar's Body: Intersections of Gender and Social Status in High Medieval Paris," in *Monks and Nuns, Saints and Outcasts: Religion in Medieval Society*, ed. Sharon Farmer and Barbara H. Rosenwein (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2000), pp. 153–71.

105. *Ibid.*, 2.12.

106. Philippe George, "A Liège, le 9 Mai 1071, le triomphe de saint Remacle," in *Autour de l'an mil, la naissance d'une principauté (Xe-XIIIe siècle)*, ed. Jean-Luis Kupper (Liège: Editions du Perron, 2000), pp. 80–92.

107. *Triumphus Remacii*, 2.22.

108. *Ibid.*, 2.25.

109. *Ibid.*, 2.24.

110. George, "A Liège, le 9 Mai 1071."

111. *Triumphus Remacii*, 2, 38. "quem in initio vepribus omnique spurcitia eliminante primus incoluit."

112. *Vita Huberti prima*, c. 3.

113. *Miracula Huberti II*, c. 1 "de longinquo venit ad monasterium."

114. *Miracula Huberti I*, c. 4 and *II*, c. 4.

115. *Miracula Huberti I*, c. 7 and *II*, c. 7. Quotation from book I.

116. Abou-el-Haj, "The Audiences for the Medieval Cult of Saints," pp. 3–15.

117. *Miracula Huberti II*, 6.

118. *Miracula Huberti I*, 2 (and in lesser detail, *II*, 2).

119. *Miracula Huberti II*, 23. In the context of competition over miracles, the similarity to the description of St. Lambert in the *Vita Remacii* is striking.

120. *Miracula Huberti II*, c. 17.

121. HR 133 and 143.

122. HR 138.

123. *Miracula Huberti I*, c. 3. "Iste meus meus est equus."

124. The following discussion is largely drawn from my article "Engineering Miracles."

125. *Miracula Huberti I*, c. 8.

126. *Ibid.*

127. *Miracula Huberti II*, c. 9. "petiit ut ad aquam, quae per canales in usus monasterii influebat, deduceretur."

128. William H. TeBrake, *Medieval Frontier: Culture and Ecology in Rijnland* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1985); Richard Keyser, "The Transformation of Traditional Woodland Management: Commercial Sylviculture in Medieval Champagne," *French Historical Studies* 32 (2009): 353–84. Richard Hoffmann, "Medieval Christendom in God's Creation: Environmental Continuities, Coevolutions, and Changes," in *Northern Europe: An Environmental History*, ed. T. Whited et al. (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC Clio, 2005), pp. 45–72.

129. Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, p. 15.

1. *Passio Agilolfi*, 1.3. See [Chapter 4](#), note 37.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. *Passio Agilolfi*, 2.
5. Ibid., “Verum tempus erat, gelidus canis cum montibus humor liquitur, et Zephyro putris se gleba resolvit: frondebant silvae, ridebant floribus herbae, Martius die claudebatur ultima, ferebat Aprilim dies crastina.” The first part of this sentence, *gelidus ... resolvit*, is a direct quotation from Vergil, *Georgics*, book 1, line 43.
6. *Translatio Quirini*, 36.
7. *Passio Agilolfi*, 2.
8. *Passio Agilolfi*, 1.8.
9. Ibid.
10. *Passio Agilolfi*, 1.9; Levison, “Bischof Agilolf von Köln,” p. 86.
11. *Passio Agilolfi*, 1.9.
12. *Passio Agilolfi*, 1.10.
13. *Passio Agilolfi*, 2. “Locus, quo completum est trophaeum fortis. Athletae, viriditatem sui perpetuo conservat germine, ut nec aestivo exuratur fervore, nec hiemali adimatur frigore, sed et inarabilis mantet usque hodie, et, ut testantur incolae, crebro per noctem micat lumine.” An identical description of a holy site is found in *Translatio Quirini*, 2.24, which uses the same language: “viriditatem sui perpetuo conservat gramine, ut nec aestivo exuratur fervore nec hiemali adimatur frigore.”
14. Ibid., “silvarum circumdensatus opacitatibus, habens montes congruos aedificandi castellorum munitionibus.” The combination of *opacitas* with *arborum* is found in Tacitus (but not in the *Germania*) and is possibly another example of the author’s classical reading.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid., “Taliter illudebantur divino iudicio, ut vindicaretur innocentis sanguinis effusio.”
19. This resembles Charlemagne’s description as the “king of the beasts.” Dutton, “Charlemagne: King of Beasts.” This is further evidence that the author of the *Passio* was trying to appeal to the royal mythology in this work.
20. *Passio Agilolfi*, 2.

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